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MURDER IN FACT AND FICTION

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MURDER
IN
FACT AND FICTION

BY

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PREFACE

THE author desires to express his gratitude to Mrs. Belloc Lowndes for kindly permitting him to make a lengthy excerpt from "A Chink in the Armour", and to Mr. Cecil Piper, the custodian of the Richmond Library, for much valuable assistance; also he wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to many criminologists, more especially to Mr. Havelock Ellis, Major Griffiths, Mr. Atlay, and Mr. W. Wood.

THE present situation is so fraught with ominous threats of coming social upheavals that everybody should seriously consider the political effect of what they write or say. The secret spring of Bolshevism is to be found in the inferiority complex, which causes the ignorant, and the incompetent, to envy and dislike their superiors. There is at the present time a great deal of thoughtless Bolshevism in Art as well as in Society. Anyone who praises the inferior or the mediocre, and affects to despise the beautiful and the good is a conscious or unconscious Bolshevist. The critic, who professes to find in minor poets like Yeates, Thompson, or Bottomley the superior of Tennyson, or who admires the crude and ungainly sculptures of Rodin or Epstein more than the immortal works of Phidias and the Greeks, is guilty not only of bad taste, but of bad politics. Those again, who pretend that the daubs of Wyndham Lewis are better than the paintings of the great masters, or that the syncopated cacophonies of futurist musicians are an advance on the beautiful harmonies of Mozart and Beethoven are also Bolsheviks. To prefer the ethical standards of Ibsen or Shaw to those of Moses or Christ is a still more dangerous form of Bolshevism. Even the praise awarded to American melodramas in which the imbecility of the hero who enters unarmed the haunts of desperate ruffians is only able to triumph on account of the still greater imbecility of the villain is really a sop to vulgar mediocrity, whilst the cult of false sentiment, buffoonery, and vulgarity on the screen is very damaging to the mentality of the spectators. Alike in Ethics and in Art there must be certain fixed standards, and those who prefer the ugly, the bizarre, and the vulgar are helping to overthrow those standards, forms, and traditions upon which our Christian civilization rests. Bolshevism objects to fixed standards, because it knows that its inferiority will thereby be rendered manifest; therefore it seeks either to enter upon side tracks where competition is evaded, or to throw scorn upon the great geniuses of the Past, whom they hate to acknowledge as their superiors.

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MURDER IN FACT AND FICTION

CHAPTER I

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CRIMINAL

CRIME and its proper punishment has attracted increasing attention during the last few decades, a whole science of penology has arisen, and a great many theories have been advanced by various schools of thought as to the best method of dealing with criminals. In fact, the proper treatment of crime is so important to the community that it forms a kind of battle-ground for the conflicting claims of Science, Theology, and Law. The theologian naturally views crime as an offence against God, the lawyer as a danger to Society, and the scientist regards it from the standpoint of Determinism. But on the whole the priest and the lawyer tend to form similar conclusions, because they are both agreed in assuming the responsibility of the criminal; whereas the scientist and various other social reformers are inclined to minimize, or altogether deny, this responsibility. On what, however, does this responsibility of the criminal finally depend? Surely ultimately on our belief or rejection of the doctrine of Free Will. If a man can really choose between Good and Evil, and if he is really able to avoid crime, then he is assuredly responsible for his misdeeds. But if a certain school of scientists are right, then there is no such thing as Free Will; it is a mere chimera of the Church, and all our actions are really necessitated by an iron law of rigid Determinism in accordance with

our environment and heredity. Of course (say they) the individual imagines himself to be free and to have an unfettered choice between two alternatives; but in reality he is in the clutch of necessity and the dupe of a sorry delusion, he does that which his circumstances and heredity inevitably dictated. Certain scientists, seeing that such a doctrine has obvious dangers in relation to crime and punishment, have qualified it by admitting that conduct results from motives, and that, therefore, certain stimuli of reward, or of punishment, often produce beneficial results.

A very hasty review of some of the theories that have been held in the past, concerning the freedom of the will and human responsibility, may aid the reader to form a judgement on this question. Among the ancient Greeks, the question of the Freedom of the Will, in its modern sense, had not really arisen in the days of Socrates and Aristotle. Socrates, indeed, so reverenced knowledge as almost to make it identical with virtue; in fact, he attributed all vicious conduct to ignorance. To this extent, then, Socrates may be claimed as a sort of determinist. Plato, however, in the Tenth Book of his famous Republic, inclines to the theory of Free Will; for he represents human souls as responsible for their future destinies, owing to their freedom of choice. Among later Greek writers, Carneades is certainly on the side of Free Will, for he objects to the Epicurean theories about chance, and espouses liberatarian views as to the rationality of choice free from all external, or antecedent necessity.

Among the Latins, the poet Lucretius expressed determinist views, but Cicero, like a true lawyer, was for Free Will and human responsibility. The advent of Christianity made the problem of more pressing interest, and involved theologians in the difficult attempt of giving such an explanation of God's omnipotence and omniscience as should harmonize with his moral government of the universe. How were they to reconcile

God's foresight with His justice and goodness? If He foresees and permits the bad conduct of the sinner, how can He with justice inflict upon him eternal damnation? St. Paul, in fact, imagines the sinner as arguing with God and saying, "Why doth he yet find fault for who hath resisted his will?" But as in the Book of Job, so again here the answer given by the Apostle is simply an appeal to authority: "Nay, but O man who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it 'Why hast thou made me thus?' Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" St. James, however, speaks clearly on the freedom of man to choose between good and evil, when he writes: "Let no man say when he is tempted 'I am tempted of God', for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed". Some of St. Paul's writings, especially the IXth Chapter to the Romans, have been misapplied, and such a meaning has been placed upon them as to build up a theory of predestination that excludes the freedom of man's will.

Among the Early Fathers, Origen's works are in favour of man's complete freedom; but in the fifth century Augustine, in his zealous opposition to Pelagius, allowed himself to be carried into very intemperate expression of opinions concerning this difficult problem; so much so that he seems in some passages almost to deny the possibility of Free Will in his zealous assertion of the complete sovereignty of God, the completeness of man's fall, and his desperate need of God's Grace.

Among the Schoolmen, Thomas Aquinas, following Plato, makes the Will depend upon the Intellect, and like Socrates he confuses knowledge with morality. Duns Scotus, however, shows that the intellect depends upon the will and stands strongly for Liberatarianism. In later years the Dominicans

espoused the philosophy of Aquinas, whereas the Franciscans and Jesuits stood on the firmer ground of the Freedom of the Will. Among the Reformers, the dominating personality of Calvin was thrown upon the side of predestination; so that he and his zealous disciple John Knox affected in this direction the whole religious outlook of Protestantism both in France and Scotland—doubtless much of the gravity of the Huguenots and the stern dourness of certain Presbyterians is due to the chilly gloom of Calvinistic Predestination. These same views were brought into the Anglican Church from Geneva, and produced the sturdy but somewhat gloomy Puritans, who overthrew the monarchy in the Great Civil War. In more modern times, scientists, approaching the problem from a different angle, and with a different purpose, have arrived at somewhat similar conclusions.

So we reach the extraordinary paradox that pious Calvinists and atheistic determinists are to be found in the same camp—both agree in denying the freedom of the will of man!

To-day, various schools of thought are making common cause in minimizing the responsibility of the criminal for his vicious deeds. Eugenists and Neo-Malthusians, as a rule, regard morals from a utilitarian standpoint, and are inclined to view the criminal as the victim of over-population. They hope, by restricting the birth rate by contraceptives, gradually to eliminate both crime and war. As a rule they deny the supernatural element in religion, and therefore object to any retributive element in punishment. In fact, Dr. Drysdale (whom I count among my friends) writes: "A new Bible is urgently needed and will be written, but it is safe to say that no one but a Neo-Malthusian can write it". From their point of view the criminal is the outcome of bad heredity, and is driven to crime by his unfitness to survive in the terrible competition of an overcrowded world.

Psycho-analysts like Freud attribute so much to the Unconscious Mind, and to the Sex Complex, that they usually join forces with the Determinists in denying the responsibility of the criminal, and in refusing to admit the retributive element in punishment.

The Socialists also, following Rousseau, hold that human nature is fundamentally good, and that all crime is due to bad environment, and that if there were a good education and an equality of opportunity, there would be little or no crime—Society, in fact, and not the criminal himself, is to be blamed whenever any crime is committed.

Closely allied with these, there has grown up a school of reformers who advocate great leniency in the treatment of criminals; they favour short sentences, and prisons which should be a species of moral hospitals. Rejecting entirely the retributive element in punishment, they are occupied rather with the reform of the criminal than with the protection of Society. The prisoners are to be enlivened with music, aided by lectures, and diverted by amusements. These amiable enthusiasts forget that it is unwise and unjust to put a premium on vice by rendering the lot of the prisoner more pleasant than that of the ordinary workman. Why should he remain honest and poor when fraud meets with such pleasant treatment? Another problem in judging of a man's responsibility, is to be found in the fact that certain individuals appear to be endowed with more than one personality. The famous novel of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is based on the double personality of a single individual, and the great Apostle of the Gentiles experienced this division in his "Ego", when he wrote: "For the good that I would, I do not, but the evil that I would not that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me". (Romans vii.) Dr. Albert Wilson quotes the case of a certain Mary Barnes who had no less than ten personalities! Moreover, many other cases of a

double personality have been quoted by doctors; but the average man is apt to suspect that, in some cases, the medical men have been the dupes of imposture. In any event, such cases are so rare that they have never yet been met with in our criminal annals.

Basing his theories entirely upon phrenology, the Italian criminologist Lombroso formed the idea that certain people were predestined criminals, and he endeavoured to show that it was all more or less a matter of cranial measurements. The practical experience of police officials like Sir Robert Anderson, however, entirely contradicted Lombroso's ideas. Criminals are not always abnormal in their cranial or facial developments. The criminal is very often in many respects an ordinary individual in everyday life. This tendency to invest the criminal with extraordinary characteristics shows itself also in fiction, especially in Bulwer Lytton, and Dickens. On the other hand, the less imaginative Thackeray wrote his novel "Catherine" in order to show that the average malefactor is a low, sordid, and uninteresting creature. Both views, as so often happen in controversy, can be supported from the actual lives of murderers and thieves. Undoubtedly, inefficiency due to abnormality is a fruitful cause of crime. The poor stunted stupid youth who is unable to achieve a living wage in the fierce competition for existence in modern life, is much tempted to lapse into crime. The diseased, the neurotic, and the incompetent, are tempted more than the capable and the robust; and their powers of moral resistance are also proportionately less vigorous. For a man is slow to admit that his ill success in life is due to his own inferiority, because his vanity and self-love urge him to the more comfortable belief that his failure is due to unfair laws and the injustice of his fellow men. He then readily adopts subversive Bolshevik ideas, which easily lead to crime. In certain cases, indeed, crime is so appalling that many people on reading of some atrocious murder will

exclaim: "He must have been mad!" Or again, when some wealthy lady steals an object in a drapery stores, the defence of Kleptomania is almost invariably put forward, and some medical authority is generally secured to give evidence in favour of the acquittal of the accused. In fact, many people are inclined to treat nearly all crime as due to madness. In all disputes, however, it is well to define one's terms, as it will often be found that the disputants are using the same word in two different senses. In this case, some people use the word madness to mean nothing more than abnormality; whereas others restrict the word to signify mania or delusion. Of course, those who deny that the individual has any real choice in his actions, will always be inclined to shelter criminals; and people who are intellectually lazy, or who lack imagination, will always find in the word mad a convenient method of disposing of a difficult and unsatisfactory phase of human nature. Both are apt to evade the real point to be considered, viz.: the accountability of the criminal for his anti-social actions. There is, unfortunately, no doubt that large numbers of people are very deficient in moral sense, and that from birth they have had little, or no, self-control.

There are three main portions of the brain: that which perceives, that which moves, and that which associates. It is this latter part which distinguishes man from the brutes, and which renders him a responsible being. This latter part, in the front of the forehead just over the brows, it is which judges, determines, and reasons; it is by this that Man is lifted up to be "a little lower than the angels and made full of glory and worship". But in certain individuals this portion of the brain is very deficient; and it is these that form the hooligans and apaches of our great cities. Now, though it is doubtless true that heredity and environment has much to do with the formation of a criminal, yet they do not fully explain him—or else how is it that two brothers will often develop under similar

circumstances in the opposite way? Nay, it sometimes happens that virtue will emerge triumphant from vicious squalid surroundings and bad heredity, whilst an excellent home and good parentage form the prelude to a career of vice. There is surely that other incalculable element of the Free Will, with which each individual has been endowed, and which in certain situations in life determines his choice for Good or Evil. The ineradicable feeling of freedom of choice that is present in all of us cannot be overcome by the sophistries of either Calvinism or Determinism; moreover, how could the feeling of Remorse for past misconduct be explained, if the offender knew that his wrong-doing was foreordained or determined? The whole theory of the justice of the infliction of pain and penalties upon the offender, rests upon our belief in the responsibility of the criminal for his wrongful acts But when the Determinist admits that rewards and punishments are useful as stimuli to the formation of motives, he practically concedes the whole case; for if the knowledge of future events can influence present conduct, then it is manifest that the freedom of the will to choose has been admitted, and that the individual is not irrevocably bound by the clogging chains of the Past.

Each individual in his own mind is conscious of the power of choice, and each one of us exercises this power very many times each day. We are not so free as we commonly suppose, and our education and our parentage have a very great influence over us; still, we are responsible beings possessed of a free volition. We are, perhaps, like birds in a cage hemmed in by the iron bars of Environment and Heredity; but the cage is large, and we can hop freely from perch to perch; some even by continual pressure of their beaks escape into the open air of complete freedom. We shall be judged not by what we cannot help, but by our use of that margin over which we exercise control. Let each of us, therefore, in the battle of life fight valiantly, knowing that: "There hath no temptation taken

you, but such is common to man; but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it".

In view of the attempt that is now being made to alter the procedure in the trial of criminals who may be found to be insane, or to have acted under uncontrollable impulse at the time of the commission of the offence, it is very necessary to emphasize the wisdom of the retention of the existing system by which the judge and the jury, and not the doctor, have full authority to decide upon the responsibility of the accused for his actions. "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*" is a wise proverb, and experience has shown that no one profession can be safely entrusted with a monopoly of power. In very early times the warrior was, of course, supreme; then, as civilization advanced, the priest became predominant; and now the doctor is striving to force his way to the front. But just as in the Middle Ages the power of the priests was found to be galling, so a great extension of medical and sanitary regulations would become intolerable. "*Obsta principiis*" is another good proverb, and the Government should be slow to alter the present ruling on the famous MacNaughten case, or to permit the doctor to be more than an expert witness at any trial.

But though it is prudent to move slowly in penology, it would be unwise for Society to take up a wholly conservative or reactionary attitude; the discoveries of Science must always react upon the social organism, and the treatment of crime cannot prove an exception to the general rule of progress. Certain principles concerning the responsibility of the criminal and the protection of Society, must be jealously guarded, still there is much to learn as how best to reform the criminal whilst he is in the prison, and how best to diminish the incentives to crime for those that are still unconvicted. The old ferocity of the days when torture was freely used, and when petty theft

was punished by death, is happily a thing of the past; and the public opinion of to-day would not tolerate the barbarities of the thumbscrew and the stake. Both in the United States and in England, continual trials are being made of new systems in the prisons, with the view of bringing to bear upon the inmates the humanizing effects of Art, Literature, Religion, and Recreation.

Lt.-Col. Rich, whilst he was Governor at Borstal, introduced there some new methods which have proved very beneficial. He divided the establishment into four separate houses, assigned a different head and a special colour to each, and initiated a series of competitions in games, athletics, and singing, which aroused a spirit of esprit de corps which has proved most helpful to the general condition of the inmates. Such schemes are excellent so long as they do not make the prisons so attractive that they cease to act as a deterrent to crime; for the reformation of the criminal must always remain subordinate to the protection of Society. Even the primitive retributive elements must not be wholly forgotten, for hatred for evil is, as David knew, a wholesome sign of moral consciousness in the State or in the individual; and excessive leniency would defeat itself, for if it exceeded popular sentiment it would lead to the formation of secret societies on the lines of the Ku Klux Klan, which would, by lynching, execute private vengeance on criminals. For, as Bacon says: "Revenge is only a certain wild kind of Justice".

CHAPTER II

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MURDERERS

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THE ideas of Lombroso concerning criminals have been rather at a discount in recent times, especially his theory that they all conform in certain physical characteristics. On the contrary, it has been found that normal people quite free from any criminal taint very frequently have similar measurements to those convicted of crime. Nature does not set a brand on the brow of Cain, nor does she regulate the shape of his ears or head in such a way as to enable us to distinguish the saint from the sinner. Indeed, were this the case one would be obliged to regard criminals as unfortunate people predestined at birth to their evil fate. In sober fact, criminals differ from each other just as much as normal people differ from each other, and such characteristics as they possess in common are rather psychological than physical.

As a general rule, criminals are inferior to the rest of the world, not only in moral, but also in intellectual capacity. Their moral inferiority alone is, of course, a serious drawback in the competition of business; for the old maxim is more or less true that teaches us that honesty is the best policy. Their chief moral drawback lies in their dislike for any continuous form of effort, their rooted incapacity for steady work of any kind. They often inherit tendencies to drink or immorality, and, as a rule, they seem unable to speak the truth, or even to appreciate the effects of their own shortcomings. They are generally (though not always) very ungrateful, and are apt to throw the blame of their failure in life upon other people, or

untoward circumstances, never upon themselves. Intellectually, they are usually stupid. People, influenced by the cinema and the melodrama, have often credited them with extraordinary intellectual powers, and have extolled some of them as prodigies of cleverness. True they often exhibit a large amount of cunning, especially in planning and carrying out their nefarious schemes; but after the commission of the crime they nearly invariably betray themselves by some act of gross stupidity. The one thing they cannot do is to remain quiet and pursue the ordinary tenor of their life; they must do something—and that something usually leads to their arrest. Thus assassins, not only in melodrama, but also in real life, love to revisit the scene of their crime, and murderers at Paris are frequently drawn to the Morgue to look at the corpse of their victim. They are led, too, almost, as it would seem, by some irresistible impulse, to talk about the murder. It was thus that the two Italian bandits near Turin betrayed themselves in an inn to an acquaintance, who at once informed Police-Inspector Cappa who, by their apprehension, laid the foundation of his future success as a detective. Often, again, they keep incriminating documents without any object, as when Bastien retained a plan showing the exact position of the grave of his victim. Troppmann made a somewhat similar blunder, for in his desire to incriminate Kinck he drew a plan in order the better to illustrate the exact way in which the murders had been perpetrated. Courvoisier, the Swiss valet, who murdered his master, though he wanted people to think that it was a case of suicide, left the knife in such a place as to render such a supposition impossible. Often, again, the restlessness of the murderer makes him try to divert suspicion from himself by trying to throw the blame upon an innocent person. Thus, Mullins, the plasterer, in endeavouring to throw suspicion upon a fellow workman Emm, only caused the police to follow up a line of investigation which led to his own conviction. He led the detective to a place

where he said he had seen the plunder secreted, and was grievously surprised when in answer to his exclamation: "Well, are you satisfied now?" received the answer: "I am quite satisfied, and I arrest you for the murder of Mrs. Elmsley".

When professional men develop criminality, it is usually because they are incapable of earning a sufficient income in their calling. The various doctors—Palmer, Lamson, Pritchard, de la Pommerais, Eustachy, Crippen, and Neil Cream, were all more or less failures in their profession. In other professions and trades too, it will be usually found that the criminals who have followed them have never been markedly successful. Crime is, in fact, the refuge of the incapable.

Criminals are undoubtedly abnormally deficient, both in physical and moral sensibility. They are much less sensitive to pain, as is proved by their great addiction to tatooing. In this, as in many other points, they resemble barbarous and primitive races, such as the Red Indians, who can endure terrible tortures with extraordinary stoicism. Again, though criminals often possess very great agility, which enables them to effect wonderful escapes, and though they are often endowed with wonderful eyesight, in all other physical respects they are very deficient. A still greater abnormality is apparent in their moral insensibility. The instinctive or habitual criminal seems to experience no shame, no pity, and no regret; during imprisonment and forced labour they exhibit only a thirst for a return to their round of evil pleasures. When they express any regret it is only annoyance at having been detected, or at having executed their crime in a foolish fashion. They eat and sleep well even on the eve of their execution, and few criminals appear really miserable.

Many murderers crack jokes to the executioner, and one remarked jocosely on the way to the gallows: "Do not be disturbed; they will not begin without me". The instinctive

criminal is so thoroughly lacking in morality that he is even surprised that you should expect him to behave honestly. When he is reproached about some act of dishonesty, he will listen as though you were a fool or a child; it seems to him so obvious that he should satisfy any desire he might have, if an opportunity were given him.

Murderers are nearly always great optimists; they seem to believe that their crimes will not be traced to them, and even after their arrest they remain exceedingly sanguine as to the result of the trial. Often he appears to be the calmest person in the court, and sometimes seems to be an indifferent spectator of the drama that is being played round his own life. They also exhibit considerable rashness, and even carelessness. Thus, Poucet pays for a cab outside the very wood in which he murders his victim; Jarvot lodges his stolen 600 francs, the fruits of his murder, in the local savings-bank, and Brouet actually wears the victim's clothes, just as Ethel Le Neve wore poor Mrs. Crippen's jewellery at a dance. Lee, the mysterious murderer whom the gallows thrice refused to hang, informed his half-sister that he should like to set fire to his mistress's house and watch the conflagration from a neighbouring hill. Dr. Castaign keeps memoranda concerning his poisoning experiments, and Villemaor, the Spanish miscreant, openly mocks at the doctors who mistake the effects of the poison he had administered for gastritis.

Sometimes with cynical effrontery they will even court attention, as when Voirbo, whilst he is engaged in throwing portions of his victim into the Seine, observes to a bystander that as to-morrow is a holiday he is baiting the river for fish. Wainwright, when desirous of removing the remains of his murdered mistress, gets a man called Stokes to help him carry the parcels containing the severed members, and actually entrusts him with them whilst he goes away to fetch a cab. During his absence, Stokes discovers part of an arm protruding

from the parcel, but refrains from raising an alarm on Wainwright's return out of fear of the consequences. He redeems his cowardice, however, by running after the cab all the way from Whitechapel, right over London Bridge to the "Hen & Chickens" in the Borough, where he finds two constables who arrest the murderer. Wainwright had also committed another foolish blunder by using chloride of lime with the intention of destroying the body, whereas, of course, it acted as a strong preservative.

Criminals lack imagination, which largely accounts both for their cruelty and their imitativeness. A novel method of murder or of suicide will soon be followed by others of a like nature. The subtle power of the advertisement in business has its counterpart in crime. People will jump from the same bridge, and even from the same part of the bridge, in order to commit suicide. Murderers will generally kill in the same way, and thieves usually repeat certain particular methods of dishonesty. Thus Smith always used drowning as a means of murder, and Landru invariably enticed his victims by means of an advertisement. It may be remembered in passing that criminologists have never satisfied themselves as to how Smith accomplished his murders. How could he have drowned three women in about a foot of water without leaving any bruises on their bodies or allowing them to utter any screams? Mr. Ernest Bowen Rowlands states that Sir E. Marshall Hall believed that he hypnotized his victims. But Justice Scrutton, who tried the case, suggested that he held up their legs and so immersed their heads.

With reference again to Landru, it was strange that the police could never discover the remains of his victims, and Landru relied on this omission for his defence, which consisted in asserting that all the ten women were probably alive, but unwilling to endure the shame of publicity by coming forward to give evidence.

Both Smith and Landru were typical of that disreputable class of rogues who live on the exploitation of their female dupes; sometimes, like Pranzini, they possess a certain amount of physical attraction; at other times they are ugly, as in the case of Landru and Smith; but in every case they must be plausible, virile, and perhaps magnetic.

Murderers are, of course, cruel and callous, or they would not go through with their self-allotted task. Palmer, for instance, can kill a wife of whom he was fond, and who was devoted to him, with little or no compunction. Lacenaire, the notorious French murderer, averred that he could kill a person with the same ease of mind as that with which he would drink a glass of wine. Poisoners, like Major Armstrong, do not hesitate to continue administering the fatal doses, though they are daily witnesses of the torture that they are inflicting on their victims. Mary Blandy went on giving arsenic to her affectionate father in spite of the love he bore her, and the appeals that he made to her affection. As a rule, they seem quite lacking in pity and ordinary humanity.

The chief motive that inspires murderers, as well as other criminals, is the *sacra fames auri*, the cursed greed for gold. Quite seventy-five per cent of murders are due to desire for gain, whilst the remaining twenty-five per cent may be divided amongst the various heads of jealousy, lust, and revenge. Fear is also the cause of many murders, since the criminal often kills in order to avoid accusation or immediate arrest. These murders, however, are divided between greed, or lust, or jealousy, in accordance with the motive which prompted the original crime. There is a prevalent notion, based on the old proverb of honour among thieves, that criminals are usually loyal to one another, but such an idea is only an optimistic paradox. For although criminals undoubtedly feel a certain bond of sympathy for each other as far as they are all in a confederacy to defeat the law, yet a very large number of arrests

are due to information that has been given to the police by one of the malefactor's associates. Thus, the brutal outrage on Miss Taylor in the night run of the Lahore mail would probably never have been satisfactorily proved against Shouldham, had not his blackguardly associate Mullins made a confession of the circumstances of the crime. Peace, again, might never have been identified had it not been for the evidence of his paramour.

People have often asked whether the murderers experience any pity for their victims, or any remorse for their crime? Not often, as they are frequently of too amoral a temperament and of too callous a disposition to appreciate the horrible nature of their acts. Thus, Mrs. Dyer the baby killer, when confronted with the number of her victims, exclaimed: "Dear me, dear me, how clever you police gentlemen must be to have found out all that! I never thought you would have found that one!" Still, they are, of course, not all equally hardened, and sometimes shrink from the deed, as is shown by the way in which they will often postpone the crime for no adequate reason, and delay the administration of the poison for many days after its purchase. We see, too, in the case of Parker, that a murderer may find it impossible to kill a person who pleads to him for mercy, though he is able to suddenly dispatch an unconscious or unsuspecting victim. As to the predisposing causes which lead on to crime and murder, it is generally found that there has been an addiction to drink, gambling, immorality, or laziness. Gambling is undoubtedly a great source of crime, and it is very sad to notice the enormous increase of this evil in recent years, especially among women. Formerly, probably not more than two or three per cent of women ever betted on horse-racing; at the present time the percentage is, of course, very much higher. Gambling fosters greed, which is itself the chief source of crime. It arises from a desire to gain money quickly without labour, and it is therefore

a potent incentive to laziness. It also promotes poverty, since when money is won it is generally spent foolishly, and when, as more often happens, it is lost, the loser, feeling unjustifiably annoyed, frequently endeavours to indemnify himself illegitimately. Gambling, in fact, saps the moral fibre and often paves the way to a career of crime.

Laziness is another fertile cause of crime. Job after job is lost owing to incurable laziness and unpunctuality. The lazy man desires food and comfort as much and more than anybody else, but he is unwilling to put forth the necessary energy to earn his living. Desires is so much greater than capacity that the criminal is frequently apt to take to crime if a man, or to prostitution if a woman. Many, of course, succeed in throwing themselves for support upon their friends or relatives, and others obtain an entrance to the workhouse or to some charitable institution; but others go to swell the great army of thieves and swindlers who fasten themselves as parasites upon the life of our large cities.

Many murderers have been gamblers and a large number has been engaged in illicit amours. Thus, Palmer was a great gambler, seducer, and adulterer. Dr. Pritchard was carrying on an intrigue with one of his maids when he poisoned his wife and his mother-in-law. Neil Cream was a sex degenerate, and Dickman a gambler. Peace had at least one mistress, and Wainwright, in spite of being a regular attendant at church, used to boast of his immoralities. In the case of female murderers, their past life has generally been marked by petty thefts and a system of untruths, as in the case of Jegado and of Van der Linden. In fact, the murderer is made and not born, and the Latin proverb holds true which runs: "*Nemo repente turpissimus*". The sad cases where children have become criminals, and even murderers, must be treated of in a separate chapter; fortunately such a phenomenon is of rare occurrence.

The best quality that is usually found in murderers is that of courage; the murderer is often brave. He will conceive his projects and carry them out in a resolute and determined fashion; he is generally not daunted by difficulty or danger, but pursues his project even in the face of considerable risk. Thus, Dickman is not deterred from his terrible enterprise by the appearance of Mrs. Nesbit at Heaton, or of the two clerks at Stannington. Palmer, when told by the detectives that the bodies of his wife and mother-in-law are to be disinterred, can crack a walnut and remark genially: "And quite right, too". Wainwright does not hesitate to leave the fateful parcels in the care of Stokes. Danghey, the terrible ex-gendarme who became the terror of a small town near Verdun, leaves a card-table to commit a murder, and having accomplished his fell purpose returns calmly to go on with his game. Landru never flinches beneath the ceaseless interrogations of the French inquisitional procedure. The bully Smith bawls aloud in the court so as frequently to interrupt the proceedings; and neither Armstrong or Dickman showed any sign of excitement in the dock. Nearly all murderers too meet their doom with great courage; the wretched Lamson forming one of a small body of exceptions.

Criminals are, of course, very vain; for vanity is one of the many forms in which egoism manifests itself. The old highwaymen, like Claude Duval and Dick Turpin, were very proud of their appearance, and most criminals who have undergone execution in public have been very particular as to their attire. Mrs. Turner, who was concerned in the mysterious murder of Sir Thomas Overbury in the reign of James I, and Mrs. Manning, who was executed in the reign of Victoria, were both much occupied with their dress; in fact, the latter, in a negative way, influenced the fashion for some time—a fact that would probably have given her some consolation in her last moments could she have foreseen it—by making ladies

avoid black satin for many years afterwards. In France, the curious practice of reconstructing the crime has not been fruitless, for the criminal has sometimes been foolish enough to exclaim: "No, that is not at all how I did it; I did it much more cleverly, like this", and he has proceeded to show the police exactly how he perpetrated the crime. Lefroy, when his play was rejected, informed an acquaintance that in spite of his apparent failure he would make the world talk about him some day—unable to achieve notoriety by talent the criminal achieves it by crime. In any case he will do something to appease his hungry craving for attracting attention to himself.

The criminal also possesses two traits which are somewhat surprising: he is often credulous and sometimes sentimental. The optimism that marks the criminal mind will frequently render him credulous, and the glib lies with which he deceives the public will not unfrequently serve to deceive himself. Bottomley was a very foolish investor of the money that he had stolen, and Palmer was usually gulled on the racecourse. Dickens showed a very true knowledge of human nature when he allows the mean and grasping Jonas Chuzzlewit to be deceived by Montagu; and, again, when the two rogues combine and are able to over-reach the hypocritical Pecksniff.

The thorough rogue has also, as a rule, a strong vein of sentimentality running through his character. He is generally fond of animals, and nearly always shows consideration to the sick. In the gallery of a theatre the wastrels will always applaud most vigorously any clap-trap sentimentality; they nearly always prefer the unreal, and have a distaste to hard fact. He is often moved to tears by a pathetic story, and he is frequently responsive to sympathetic treatment. In fact, it is really only in this direction that he is amenable to reformative treatment. With criminals as with others, "*Amor vincit omnia*".

Another point of interest in the psychology of murderers is as to whether or not they ever experience a genuine repentance.

In the first place, it is necessary before answering this question to divide murderers into two distinct classes. In the first class are those who murder without provocation or an extraordinary amount of temptation, like Palmer and Smith. In the second class are those who are not naturally criminals and have shown no tendency to cheat or lie in their former life, but who, under an extraordinary temptation due to misplaced love, or acting under great provocation, commit murder. These latter are, as a rule, superior in character to burglars, forgers, or thieves, and very frequently experience a genuine repentance prior to their execution, and if reprieved become exemplary prisoners. If their crime pass undetected, or if, through lack of sufficient evidence they secure an acquittal, they usually pass the remainder of their life in a praiseworthy fashion. But a sincere repentance on the part of a deliberate and cold-blooded murderer who commits the crime for the purpose of gain, is exceedingly rare, though, of course, many of them pretend to become religious in their interviews with the prison chaplains; but, as a rule, when it is not the result of deliberate hypocrisy it is simply remorse masquerading under the disguise of repentance. Criminals will, however, often try to justify themselves in various ways. Thus Bonnot, the leader of the terrible band of robbers who terrorized France in 1912, declares: "I am not more guilty than the sweaters who exploit poor devils". Many others take the pose of Robin Hood and state that they rob the rich in order to help the poor; but their charity generally both begins and ends "at home".

The great breeder of crime is the state of destitution and immorality in which many children are reared in our large towns, and though, owing to the efforts of such philanthropists as Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Barnardo, and General Booth, much has been done to minimize this evil, a vast number still grow up under conditions very prejudicial to the promotion of character. The very size of such towns as London, Birmingham,

and Glasgow, is in itself a great difficulty. The slum-bred child sees bad examples and the violent contrasts of poverty and wealth. He is tempted by the glittering display in the shops, the glare of the cinemas and public houses, and easily falls first into petty pilfering, and then into more serious crime. The towns, too, differ from the country in that greater feeling of irresponsibility which it develops in its denizens; for whereas in the village everybody knows the business of his neighbour, and everybody feels the pressure of public opinion, in the town there is no such wholesome restraint, and the weak or vicious youth easily drifts into bad ways without comment or reproof. Few reforms could be more useful than the transplanting of many of our large factories from the town into the pure air of the country, where all the surroundings are more conducive to simplicity and virtue.

CHAPTER III

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THE unhappy Laurence Shirley Ferrers, fourth earl of that name, born in 1711, had a stormy life and a tragic end. He left the University without taking his degree, made the grand tour, and having entered upon the earldom in 1745, gave evidence of some future promise by two or three speeches in the House of Lords; but his taste for low company and dissipation marred his career. In 1752 he married a beautiful and amiable girl, a daughter of Sir W. Meredith; but four years later she was obliged to sue in the House of Lords for a separation on account of his strange habits and furious temper. He had grievously injured a man because he was kept waiting for his mare; quarrelled with his clerical brother, the Rev. Walter Shirley, because he would not get drunk with him, and insulted Sir Thomas Stapleton. The suit for the separation was successful, and a sum was set aside out of the rents of the estate for the maintenance of Lady Ferrers. The Earl was asked to choose an agent to act in this matter, and himself chose a certain Mr. Johnson, supposing that he would prove very amenable to his wishes. But finding that this was by no means the case, he conceived a violent dislike for him as being, as he supposed, rather in his wife's interest than in his own. Being of a naturally suspicious and vindictive disposition, he allowed these unjust ideas to rankle in his mind to such a degree as to render him desirous of killing him. He had already endeavoured to eject the agent from the farm (Lount) which he occupied on his estates; but he had failed to secure his object owing to the

opposition of the trustees. This balking of his wishes doubtless rendered the Earl the more furious and revengeful. On Sunday, 13th January, 1760, he asked Johnson to come up to his place at Stanton in order to settle some accounts. The steward went to the meeting on the 18th of January without any fear for his personal safety; because the Earl had very craftily dissembled his resentment, and had recently appeared to be much more amicable. In order to remove any opposition to his design, the Earl invited his mistress, Mrs. Clifford, and her four girls, in the quaint phraseology of those days, "to fetch a walk", and on one device or another got rid of nearly all the servants. Three maids, however, remained in the kitchen, and one of them, at about three o'clock, admitted the doomed Johnson and showed him in till he was met by Lord Ferrers, who conducted him to the library. Having locked the door the Earl at first expostulated with the steward on some details of the accounts. He then suddenly put a paper in front of Johnson in which he was asked to confess himself a villain, and demanded his signature to it. When the steward demurred, he ordered him to kneel down and pray, as he was determined to shoot him. At the same time he drew out a pistol, which he had previously loaded, and shot him whilst he was on his knees; for, unlike Hamlet, he did not object to shoot his enemy whilst at his prayers. Seeing, however, that the steward was still living, he was seized with remorse, and having first placed him on a chair, he called for his servants and bade them fetch a surgeon and inform Miss Johnson about her father's condition. When that lady arrived he told her that he had shot her father on purpose, and made a similar declaration to the doctor. He watched the surgeon examine the wound, and seemed surprised that the ball had remained in the body, because whilst practising pistol shooting he had seen the bullets pass through hard thick substances.

The surgeon, though he saw the case to be hopeless, thought it wise to temporize, and held out hopes of his recovery. The Earl meanwhile endeavoured to sustain his courage by the immoderate drinking of spirits. He averred that he was not sorry for his act, that Johnson deserved his death, and that he would stand his trials before the House of Peers. He said he could justify the act to his own conscience and that he had meant to kill Johnson; but as he had failed he hoped that now he might recover. He tried to tamper with the doctor and to suggest to him as to what evidence he ought to give. As he grew more violent through drink he refused to allow Johnson to be removed, but returned to watch the dying man, and insulted him with abusive language. He even threatened to shoot him as he lay helpless on the bed, and it was only with difficulty that he was restrained from further acts of violence. He continued to pull at the bedclothes and to threaten to strike him. The doctor, however, secured a number of assistants, who removed the unfortunate man to his home, which was less than a mile distant, but he expired shortly afterwards in very great agony. The doctor now returned to arrest the Earl. This was accomplished, with some danger, as he was still armed and very furious. He was at first lodged in a public-house at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, then in Leicester gaol, and thence conveyed to London, where he was given over into the charge of the Black Rod, and by that functionary sent to the Tower. He seemed calm and collected, and argued in a rational but perverse fashion about his crime. He made very pertinent remarks about habeas corpus, and desired that none of his relatives should be admitted to visit him.

The circumstances of the murder were so cruel and premeditated, that there was a loud cry for vengeance. Lord Keeper Henley was appointed Lord High Steward for the trial, which took place in Westminster Hall, which was specially fitted up for the purpose.

Nearly all the peers were present at this *cause célèbre*. But we must remember that the House of Lords in the days of George II only counted some hundred and seventy members; it was left for Pitt and still more recent Premiers to swell its numbers to its present somewhat regrettable size. On 16th April the delinquent was brought from the Tower in a coach, attended by various officials and a detachment of the Guards. He was arraigned before a large concourse of people, including many foreigners, who seemed much impressed by the magnificence of the tribunal. But the account of the trial, execution, and psychology of the prisoner, are so admirably given by Horace Walpole in his incomparable "Letters", that one cannot do better than quote them *in extenso*, for some writers seem never to grow old, but to have the secret of perpetual youth; where lies their secret? How is it that Euripides and Cicero seem so modern? How is it that Horace Walpole, the virtuoso and connoisseur of Strawberry Hill, can still charm us by his gossipy epistles, when later writers of more solid worth have grown antiquated, and alas, uninteresting?

TO GEORGE MONTAGU, ESQ.

Arlington Street, April 19, 1760.

The other trial, Lord Ferrers's, lasted three days. You have seen the pomp and awfulness of such doings, so I will not describe it to you. The judge and criminal were far inferior to those you have seen. For the Lord High Steward, he neither had any dignity, nor affected any; nay, he held it all so cheap, that he said at his own table, t'other day, "I will not send for Garrick and learn to act a part." At first I thought Lord Ferrers shocked, but in general he behaved rationally and coolly; though it was a strange contradiction to see a man trying, by his own sense, to prove himself out of his senses. It was more shocking to see his two brothers brought to prove the lunacy in their own blood, in order to save their brother's life. Both are almost as ill-looking men as the Earl; one of them is a clergyman,

suspended by the Bishop of London for being a Methodist; the other a wild vagabond, whom they call in the country, ragged and dangerous. After Lord Ferrers was condemned, he made an excuse for pleading madness, to which he was forced by his family. He is respited till Monday fortnight, and will then be hanged, I believe in the Tower; and to the mortification of the peerage, is to be anatomised, conformably to the late act for murder. Many peers were absent; Lord Foley and Lord Jersey attended only the first day; and Lord Huntingdon, and my nephew Orford (in compliment to his mother), as related to the prisoner, withdrew without voting. But never was a criminal more literally tried by his peers, for the three persons, who interested themselves most in the examination, were at least as mad as he; Lord Ravensworth, Lord Talbot and Lord Fortescue.

TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, May 7, 1760.

What will your Italians say to a peer of England, an earl of one of the best families, tried for murdering his servant, with the utmost dignity and solemnity, and then hanged at the common place of execution for highwaymen, and afterwards anatomised? This must seem a little odd to them, especially as they have not lately had a Sixtus Quintus. I have hitherto spoken of Lord Ferrers to you as a wild beast, a mad assassin, a low wretch, about whom I had no curiosity. If I now am going to give you a minute account of him, don't think me so far part of an English mob, as to fall in love with a criminal merely because I have had the pleasure of his execution. I certainly did not see it, nor should have been struck with mere intrepidity—I never adored heroes, whether in a cart or a triumphal car—but there has been such wonderful coolness and sense in all this man's last behaviour, that it has made me quite inquisitive about him —not at all pity him. I only reflect, what I have often thought, how little connection there is between any man's sense and his sensibility—so much so, that instead of Lord Ferrers having any ascendant over his passions, I am disposed to think that his drunkenness, which was supposed to heighten

his ferocity, has rather been a lucky circumstance—what might not a creature of such capacity, and who stuck at nothing, have done, if his abilities had not been drowned in brandy? I will go back a little into his history. His misfortunes, as he called them, were dated from his marriage, though he has been guilty of horrid excesses unconnected with matrimony, and is even believed to have killed a groom who died a year after receiving a cruel beating from him. His wife, a very pretty woman, was sister of Sir William Meredith, had no fortune, and he says, trepanned him into marriage, having met him drunk at an assembly in the country, and kept him so till the ceremony was over. As he always kept himself so afterwards, one need not impute it to her. In every other respect, and one scarce knows how to blame her for wishing to be a countess, her behaviour was unexceptionable. He had a mistress (Mrs. Clifford) before and two or three children, and her he took again after the separation from his wife. He was fond of both, and used both ill; his wife so ill, always carrying pistols to bed, and threatening to kill her before morning, beating her, and jealous without provocation, that she got separated from him by act of Parliament, which appointed receivers of his estate in order to secure her allowance. This he could not bear. However, he named his steward for one, but afterwards finding out that this Johnson had paid her fifty pounds without his knowledge, and suspecting him of being in the confederacy against him, he determined, when he failed of opportunities of murdering his wife, to kill the steward, which he effected as you have heard. The shocking circumstances attending the murder, I did not tell you—indeed, while he was alive, I scarce liked to speak my opinion even to you; for though I felt nothing for him, I thought it wrong to propagate any notions that might interfere with mercy, if he could be thought deserving it—and not knowing into what hands my letter might pass before it reached yours, I chose to be silent, though nobody could conceive greater horror than I did for him at his trial. Having shot the steward at three in the afternoon, he persecuted him till one in the morning, threatening again to murder him, attempting to tear off his bandages, and terrifying him till in that misery

he was glad to obtain leave to be removed to his own house; and when the Earl heard the poor creature was dead, he said he glorified in having killed him. You cannot conceive the shock this evidence gave the court—many of the lords were standing to look at him—at once they turned from him with destestation. I had heard that on the former affair in the House of Lords, he had behaved with great shrewdness —no such thing appeared at his trial. It is now pretended, that his being forced by his family against his inclination to plead madness, prevented his exerting his parts—but he has not acted in anything as if his family had influence over him—consequently his reverting to much good sense leaves the whole inexplicable. The very night he received sentence, he played at picquet with the warders and would play for money, and would have continued to play every evening, but they refused. Lord Cornwallis, Governor of the Tower, shortened his allowance of wine after his conviction, agreeably to the late strict acts on murder. This he much disliked, and at last pressed his brother the clergyman to intercede that at least he might have more porter; for, said he, what I have is not a draught. His brother represented against it, but at last consenting (and he did obtain it)—then said the earl, "Now is as good a time as any to take leave of you—adieu!" A minute journal of his whole behaviour has been kept, to see if there was any madness in it. Dr. Munro since the trial has made an affidavit of his lunacy. The Washingtons were certainly a very frantic race, and I have no doubt of madness in him, but not of a pardonable sort. Two petitions from his mother and all his family were presented to the King, who said, as the House of Lords had unanimously found him guilty, he would not interfere. Last week my Lord Keeper very good naturedly got out of a gouty bed to present another: the King would not hear him. "Sir," said the Keeper, "I don't come to petition for mercy or respite; but that the four thousand pounds which Lord Ferrers has in India bonds, may be permitted to go according to his disposition of it to his mistress, children, and the family of the murdered man." "With all my heart" said the King, "I have no objection; but I will have no message carried to him from me." However, this grace was notified

to him and gave him great satisfaction; but unfortunately it now appears to be law, that it is forfeited to the sheriff of the county where the fact was committed; though when my Lord Hardwicke was told that he had disposed of it, he said, to be sure he may before conviction.

Dr. Pearce, Bishop of Rochester offered his service to him; he thanked the Bishop, but said, as his own brother was a clergyman, he chose to have him. Yet he had another relation who has been much more busy about his repentance. I don't know whether you have ever heard that one of the singular characters here is a Countess of Huntingdon, aunt of Lord Ferrers. She is the Saint Theresa of the Methodists. Judge how violent bigotry must be in such mad blood! The Earl, by no means disposed to be a convert, let her visit him, and often sent for her, as it was more company; but he grew sick of her, and complained that she was enough to provoke anybody. She made her suffragan, Whitfield, pray for and preach about him, and that impertinent fellow told his enthusiasts in his sermon, that my Lord's heart was stone. The earl wanted much to see his mistress: my Lord Cornwallis, as simple an old woman as Lady Huntingdon herself, consulted her whether he should permit it. "Oh! by no means; it would be letting him die in adultery!" In one thing she was more sensible. He resolved not to take leave of his children, four girls, but on the scaffold, and then to read to them a paper he had drawn up, very bitter on the family of Meredith, and on the House of Lords for the first transaction. This my Lady Huntingdon persuaded him to drop, and he took leave of his children the day before. He wrote two letters in the preceding week to Lord Cornwallis on some of these requests; they were cool and rational, and concluded with desiring him not to mind the absurd requests of his (Lord Ferrers's) family in his behalf. On the last morning he dressed himself in his wedding clothes, and said he thought this, at least, as good an occasion of putting them on as that for which they were first made. He wore them to Tyburn. This marked the strong impression on his mind. His mother wrote to his wife in a weak angry style, telling her to intercede for him as her duty, and to swear to his madness. But this was not so easy; in all her

cause before the Lords, she had persisted that he was not mad.

Sir William Meredith and even Lady Huntingdon had prophesied that his courage would fail him at last, and had so much foundation, that it is certain Lord Ferrers had often been beat:—but the Methodists were to get no honour by him. His courage rose where it was most likely to fail,—an unlucky circumstance to prophets, especially when they have had the prudence to have all kind of probability on their side. Even an awful procession of above two hours, with that mixture of pageantry, shame and ignominy, nay, and of delay, could not dismount his resolution. He set out from the Tower at nine, amidst crowds, thousands. First went a string of constables; then one of the sheriffs, in his chariot and six, the horses dressed with ribbons; next Lord Ferrers, in his own landau and six, his coachman crying all the way; guards at each side; the other sheriff's chariot followed empty, with a mourning coach-and-six, a hearse, and the Horse Guards. Observe, that the empty chariot was that of the other sheriff, who was in the coach with the prisoner, and who was Vaillant, the French bookseller in the Strand. How will you decipher all these strange circumstances to Florentines? A bookseller in robes and in mourning, sitting as a magistrate by the side of the Earl; and in the evening everybody going to Vaillant's shop to hear the particulars. I wrote to him, as he serves me, for the account; but he intends to print it, and I will send it you with some other things and the trial. Lord Ferrers at first talked on indifferent matters, and observing the prodigious confluence of people, (the blind was drawn up on his side) he said,—"But they never saw a lord hanged, and perhaps will never see another." One of the dragoons was thrown by his horse's leg entangling in the hind wheel: Lord Ferrers expressed much concern, and said, "I hope there will be no death to-day but mine," and was pleased when Vaillant told him the man was not hurt. Vaillant made excuses to him on his office. "On the contrary," said the Earl, "I am much obliged to you. I feared the disagreeableness of the duty might make you depute your under-sheriff. As you are so good as to execute it yourself, I am persuaded the dreadful apparatus will be

conducted with more expedition." The chaplain of the Tower, who sat backwards, then thought it his turn to speak, and began to talk on religion; but Lord Ferrers received it impatiently. However, the chaplain persevered, and said he wished to bring his Lordship to some confession or acknowledgment of contrition for a crime so repugnant to the laws of God and man, and wished him to endeavour to do whatever could be done in so short a time. The Earl replied, "He had done everything he proposed to do with regard to God and man; and as to discourses on religion, you and I, Sir," said he to the clergyman, "shall probably not agree on that subject. The passage is very short; you will not have time to convince me, nor I to refute you; it cannot be ended before we arrive." The clergyman still insisted, and urged, that, at least, the world would expect some satisfaction. Lord Ferrers replied with some impatience, "Sir, what have I to do with the world? I am going to pay a forfeit life, which my country has thought proper to take from me—what do I care now what the world thinks of me? But, Sir, since you do desire some confession, I will confess one thing to you; I do believe there is a God. As to modes of worship, we had better not talk on them. I always thought Lord Bolingbroke in the wrong to publish his notions on religion: I will not fall into the same error." The chaplain, seeing sensibly that it was in vain to make any more attempts, contended himself with representing to him, that it would be expected from one of his calling, and that even decency required, that some prayer should be used on the scaffold, and asked his leave, at least to repeat the Lord's Prayer there. Lord Ferrers replied, "I always thought it a good prayer; you may use it if you please."

While these discourses were passing, the procession was stopped by the crowd. The Earl said he was dry, and wished for some wine and water. The sheriff said he was sorry to be obliged to refuse him. By late regulations they were enjoined not to let prisoners drink on the way from the place of imprisonment to that of execution, as great indecencies had been formerly committed by the lower species of criminals getting drunk; "And though," he said, "my Lord, I might think myself excusable in overlooking this order out of regard to

a person of your Lordship's rank, yet there is another reason which, I am sure, will weigh with you:— your Lordship is sensible of the greatness of the crowd; we must draw up to some tavern; the confluence would be so great, that it would delay the expedition which your Lordship seems so much to desire." He replied he was satisfied, adding— "Then I must be content with this," and took some pigtail tobacco out of his pocket. As they went on, a letter was thrown into his coach; it was from his mistress, to tell him it was impossible, from the crowd, for her to get up to the spot where he had appointed her to meet and take leave of him, but that she was in a hackney-coach of such a number. He begged Vaillant to order his officers to try to get the hackney-coach up to his. "My Lord," said Vaillant, "you have behaved so well hitherto, that I think it is a pity to venture unmanning yourself." He was struck, and was satisfied without seeing her. As they drew nigh, he said, "I perceive we are almost arrived; it is time to do what little more I have to do;" and then taking out his watch, gave it to Vaillant desiring him to accept it as a mark of his gratitude for his kind behaviour, adding, "It is scarce worth your acceptance; but I have nothing else; it is a stop-watch, and a pretty accurate one." He gave five guineas to the chaplain, and took out as much for the executioner. Then giving Vaillant a pocket-book, he begged him to deliver it to Mrs. Clifford, his mistress with what it contained, and with his most tender regards, saying "The key of it is to the watch, but I am persuaded you are too much a gentleman to open it." He destined the remainder of the money in his purse to the same person, and with the same tender regards.

When they came to Tyburn, his coach was detained some minutes by the conflux of people; but as soon as the door was opened, he stepped out readily and mounted the scaffold; it was hung with black, by the undertaker, and at the expense of his family. Under the gallows was a new invented stage, to be struck from under him. He showed no kind of fear or discomposure, only just looking at the gallows with a slight motion of dissatisfaction. He said little, kneeled for a moment to the prayer, said "Lord have mercy upon me and forgive me my errors," and immediately mounted the

upper stage. He had come pinioned with a black sash, and was unwilling to have his hands tied, or his face covered, but was persuaded to both. When the rope was put round his neck he turned pale, but recovered his countenance instantly, and was but seven minutes from leaving the coach, to the signal given for striking the stage. As the machine was new, they were not ready at it; his toes touched it, and he suffered a little, having had time, by their bungling, to raise his cap, but the executioner pulled it down again, and they pulled his legs, so that he was soon out of pain, and quite dead in four minutes. He desired not to be stripped and exposed, and Vaillant promised him, though his clothes must be taken off, that his shirt should not. This decency ended with him; the sheriffs fell to eating and drinking on the scaffold, and helped up one of their friends to drink with them, as he was still hanging, which he did for above an hour, and then was conveyed back with the said pomp to Surgeon's Hall to be dissected. The executioners fought for the rope, and the one who lost it cried. The mob tore off the black cloth as relics; but the universal crowd behaved with great decency and admiration, as they well might; for sure no exit was ever made with more sensible resolution and with less ostentation.

This murder is not only interesting on account of the exalted position held by the delinquent, but also because it is one of the very few cases in which a peer has been tried as an ordinary criminal by the House of Lords. There have, of course, been numerous trials of peers in the Upper Chamber by impeachment or bills of attainder; but these have nearly invariably been for political offences. The case that is most analogous to that of Lord Ferrers is that of the Earl of Cardigan, who was tried by his peers for having unlawfully wounded Captain Harvey James Tuckett in a duel on Wimbledon Common, on 12th September, 1840. The Lords, acting in their judicial capacity with Lord Denman as High Steward, took advantage of a legal technicality, and (like Judge Cambo of Malta, refusing to know in their public capacity that of which they were perfectly aware as private

individuals) declared the Earl "not guilty upon their honour". The only peer who felt any qualms of conscience on this strange verdict being the Duke of Cleveland, who declared "Not guilty legally upon my honour". The technical device by which they executed this piece of legal chicanery was by affecting to doubt the identity of the wounded man with the Captain Tuckett described in the case; because the Christian names had not been given in full in the wording of the indictment. One of those verdicts that may delight lawyers but which enrage the public. The Earl later redeemed himself from the unpopularity which this affair and his conduct as Colonel of the XIth Hussars had given him, by his gallant leadership in the famous cavalry charge at Balaclava. Though even on that occasion it seems that he mistook the orders that he received, and thereby incurred a useless loss of life. This duel was one of the last fought in England; it was, in fact, never really popular in this country, and only existed as a prevalent custom during the Stuarts and the four Georges. The duel was simply a survival of the ordeal or trial by battle; that quaint and wholly illogical device by which the defendant could claim to have the matter decided by single combat. This strange custom came to an end in 1819, when a certain Edward Thornton, being accused of murdering Mary Ashford, challenged the brother to decide the matter by a single combat. The brother refused to fight and Thornton in that way escaped any further trial. The usage was abolished in 1820.

The chief modern interest, however, of this unhappy case lies in its having raised at an early date the very difficult question of determining what degree of mental unsoundness is necessary to free a criminal from responsibility for his tortuous acts. In this case, as has been shown, the criminal adopted the strange and unwise course of pleading his own insanity in person; and, in order to render such a method at all feasible, he had, of course, to adopt the defence of temporary insanity. But as we

have seen, his plea was not allowed. The following cases illustrate the gradual evolution of English criminal law in this matter.

In 1723, Edward Arnold wounded Lord Onslow, and a plea of insanity was put forward on his behalf; but the judge laid it down that, in order for such an excuse to be valid, the man must be shown to be totally deprived of his understanding and memory, and not to know what he is doing more than an infant, brute, or wild beast. In 1760 came the Ferrers case. In 1800, when Hadfield was tried for shooting at George III, the Judge Kenyon ruled that if a man is in a deranged state of mind he is not criminally answerable for his acts; but the point is to decide as to whether the accused was sane or not at the time the act was committed.

In 1812 when Bellingham, one of the unhappy band of political murderers, shot Percival in the House of Commons, Mansfield made responsibility hinge upon whether the prisoner at the time could distinguish between good and evil. But the most important case is that of the murder of Mr. Drummond Peel's private secretary in 1843 in Parliament Street, by Daniel MacNaughten. In this case the defending barrister, Cockburn, pleaded partial insanity, and averred that the accused was not capable of discerning between right and wrong with reference to the act in question; and he secured a verdict to that effect.

On the Continent, there has been a tendency to go beyond this; and "irresistible impulse" is sometimes admitted as a solid plea; and many doctors and scientists would like to dangerously extend the grounds on which lunacy may act as a bar to punishment. Before leaving this very interesting topic we cannot help remarking how very difficult it is to decide as to what exactly constitutes insanity. Locke defined a lunatic as one who draws correct conclusions from false premises; but this is, of course, inadequate. It is better, perhaps, to say that lunacy is largely a failure on the part of the individual to

adapt himself to his environment; or to correct his fancies by facts. He lives in a subjective world of his own and is unable to correct his delusions by external phenomena. He imagines himself an emperor, though he is wearing old clothes and performing menial tasks. From a moral standpoint, we may say that madness is a distorted view of the ego; from extreme vanity the deluded one imagines himself the subject of every conversation and the intended victim of countless plots.

The fact is that there are very many kinds of madness, from raging mania, idiocy, or absurd delusions, down to mild hallucinations or mere eccentricities. There is, in fact, no exact line of demarcation between sanity and insanity, any more than there is between health and disease. There are, on the one hand, certain people (idiots and maniacs) who are obviously mad, and there are the great mass of normal people who are obviously sound, both in mind and body; but in between these people there are many who are on the borderland. The late disclosures in connection with the Harnett case have made it clear that the present regulations that guard the liberty of the subject in this matter are not sufficiently stringent, and that the ideas of doctors concerning insanity are by no means always to be trusted—*Quis custodict custodes?* Probably, visits of inspection of lunatic asylums will be rendered more frequent and more unexpected. The novel called "Valentine Vox" did much to reform our asylums; but it is evident that much remains still to be done. Relatives are often only too ready to rid themselves of the presence of some troublesome member of the family, more especially when his segregation is financially remunerative. We must, therefore, be very careful that mere eccentricity or abnormality is not confused with madness. For some scientists like Lombroso would term all geniuses mad; like the Roman Judge in the Acts, they would exclaim: "Paul, thou art beside thyself; too much learning hath made thee mad".

From the days of Paul to those of Oliver Lodge, the stupid and unimaginative people, who form the great bulk of the population of any country, have always been ready to treat all prophets and teachers of new ideas as visionaries or madmen. For extraordinary views and new ideas are distasteful to the mass, and a sort of herd instinct prompts people to stamp them out. We English dislike genius and worship the commonplace, which makes the rise of men like Disraeli so difficult, whereas the path to power is rendered smooth for platitudinarians like W. H. Smith and the late Duke of Devonshire. Equally, too, must care be taken to guard against those who would regard all murderers as a priori madmen; for such an idea appeals very strongly to unimaginative people, who cannot conceive of sane people committing abnormal acts. Others like Smollet and Hume in their comments on Lord Ferrers's case, would punish all murderers, whether mad or not, because their acts are equally pernicious to Society. This, too, is, of course, quite impossible; for idiots and maniacs are obviously irresponsible beings, and punishment can only fitly follow upon those that are found to be accountable for their actions. A Board of Inquiry must be constituted to decide upon these difficult cases, which will forward the result of their deliberations to the judge who tries the case. The final decision, however, should not rest with the Board, but with the judge and the jury.

As this question touches law and morals as well as medicine, the Board might include lawyers and clergy as well as mental experts.

It seems fairly certain that had Lord Ferrers lived under George V instead of under George II, he would have gone to Broadmoor instead of to Tyburn; for the evidence of madness in his case was at least as great as that in the case of Ronald True. The harshness of George II in refusing to permit of an execution at the Tower, was similar to his obduracy in the matter of Admiral Byng.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLITICAL MURDERER

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THOSE who are given to form hasty generalizations would probably consider that Socialists and Anarchists are very much of a muchness; but such is by no means the case. Their philosophy of life, and their political methods, are diametrically opposed to each other; their only resemblance is to be found in their real or suppressed championship of the working classes, of the poor and of the oppressed. Socialists are, as a rule, eager to capture the existing political machinery of the State in order to use it for their own ends; Anarchists, as their name implies, object to the very existence of the State at all. Socialists are ready to make people all conform to certain rules and laws for the common good of Society; Anarchists exalt the individuality of man as the only real freedom. Anarchists aim at the destruction of all existing order by violence; Socialists desire a slow evolution attained by argument and persuasion.

Mr. Auberon Herbert, in one of his articles, explains the temperament of the anarchist, and in a somewhat paradoxical manner argues that the anarchical spirit is produced by the excessive interference with the liberty of the individual. He imagines his anarchist to deliver himself as follows: "You say that you have a majority on your side—that this majority is strong enough to inflict its will on others. Let it be so; I make no pretence to possess a majority; a minority is good enough for me—a small minority of desperate, reckless men, believing in their ideas, and not caring much for their lives. We, too, have power It is not like your power, disguised under innumerable

forms; it is power, brutal, naked, and not ashamed. Where, after all, is the difference between us? Your power depends upon clever electioneering devices; mine is the power that can be carried in the pocket of any ragged coat".

But as a matter of fact an anarchist is simply a rebel against Authority. He is, as a rule, an unruly son who refuses to obey his parents; a dishonest scholar who is insolent to his teachers; and an insubordinate workman who quarrels with his employer. He is a rebel against God, and against Man. He is an atheist because he cannot admit that anyone can exist greater than himself—not even God. He is a republican because he hates kings, and an anarchist because he cannot endure the cohesion, order, and obedience necessary for Socialism. The anarchist, in fact, cannot adapt himself to the environment of Society, and he is generally best off in prison. He is really an example of Atavism, a throw-back into the past, unsuited to our modern civilization, who wishes to revert to the barbarous and primitive condition of mankind. He wishes to be entirely free and untrammelled from every sort of constraint, because every kind of constraint frets and chafes him. He is the victim of an inordinate vanity which prevents him from adapting himself to suit his environment; but with foolish impotence he endeavours, often by violent acts, to make the environment suit him. His aims are foolish, and his methods too often criminal.

The various sayings of Nihilists and Anarchists form an instructive commentary on the propaganda by the Deed. Thus, Baboeuf, the French Communist, tells us: "The end justifies the means: abolish property and you abolish crime". Whilst Proudhon, the French doctrinaire Socialist, says bluntly that all property is only the result of theft, and that a thief should really be truly termed "the author of restitution".

The anarchist or extreme socialist, though he usually ridicules Christian doctrines, loves to quote Christian ethics. Thus, Kropotkin exclaims: "Love your neighbour as yourself; but let

a child follow this principle and take off its coat to give to a shivering pauper, and his mother will tell him that he must never understand moral principles in their right sense" The great hero of anarchism, Ravachol the murderer, liar, and thief, tells us that to kill is often a necessity of life, and: "If I have murdered it was only to satisfy my personal needs".

The following gives an official declaration of their charming mentality:

"Our ruler is our enemy. We Anarchists, i.e., men without any rules, fight against all those who have usurped any power or who wish to usurp it. Our enemy is the owner who keeps land for himself, and makes the peasant work for his advantage. Our enemy is the manufacturer who fills his factory with wage slaves; our enemy is the State, whether monarchical, oligarchical, or democratic, with its officials, magistrates, and police spies. Our enemy is every thought of Authority, whether men call it God or devil, in whose name the priests have so long ruled the people. Our enemy is the Law which always oppresses the weak by the strong. But if the landowners, the manufacturers, the heads of States, the priests and the Law are our enemies, we are also theirs, and we boldly oppose them". (Geneva manifesto, 1882.)

The ethical judgement of anarchists can perhaps best be gauged by the fact that many of them admired this Ravachol, who was a common thief and murderer, a ghoul who violated a tomb to despoil the corpse, and who brutally murdered an old hermit for the sake of a few francs!

Our present labour leaders, Ramsay Macdonald, Clynes, and Henderson, might agree with Karl Marx, but they would abhor the violence of Bakounine. Just as from time to time the world produces great philanthropists like Howard, Clarkson, or Barnardo, so also does it give us terrible scourges like Bakounine, who has been not unjustly termed the Father of Terrorism.

This sinister personage, who admired Satan as the first free-thinker and emancipator, was born of a good Russian family in 1814, and received a good education. He commenced life as an officer, but resigned his commission in 1834. In 1843 he made the acquaintance of Proudhon and Karl Marx, and adopted revolutionary principles. He was, however, no ordinary revolutionary, for he did not want to capture the State, but to destroy it. "The end of revolution," he writes, "is the destruction of all power—religious, monarchical, aristocratic, and bourgeois in Europe. We want to destroy all States and all Churches." He admired robbers, and openly stated that they must be utilized as allies in the Revolution that he desired. He and his disciple Nechayeff, in fact, invented the method of Propaganda by the Deed, which led to such terrible consequences in Italy, Spain, and France. Kropotkin also gave his adhesion to anarchy in this dangerous shape. "A simple deed," he declares, "makes more propaganda than a thousand pamphlets. The government defends itself, it rages pitilessly; but thus it only causes further deeds to be committed and drives the insurgents to heroism. One deed brings forth another; opponents join the mutiny; the government splits into fractions; harshness intensifies the conflict; concessions come too late; the revolution breaks out." After various sporadic outbreaks at Naples and Lyons, a series of most terrible outrages occurred at Paris in 1892, the diabolical work of Ravachol, Vaillant, Henry, and several other anarchists.

Ravachol escaped condemnation for bomb outrages in 1892, owing to the cowardice of a Paris jury; but was executed for the murder of the old hermit by the greater courage of a jury in the Provinces. Similar cowardice has recently been exhibited by another jury at Paris, who on Christmas Eve, 1923, acquitted Mlle Germaine Berton, who killed Marius Plateau of the Action Française, and merely ordered her to pay the ridiculous sum of one franc to the family of her victim! Yet the girl admitted the murder and even gloried in it. The defence, of course,

consisted in stating that it was not an ordinary murder for a private end, but a political crime against a Royalist organization. In English law this would be no defence to a charge of murder; but on the Continent political murders are still regarded as belonging to a special category entitling them to greater leniency of treatment. In England, fortunately, these pernicious doctrines have at present no popular acceptance, and the murderers of Sir Henry Wilson suffered for their crime in exactly the same way as if they had killed some ordinary person for some purely private purpose.

Before concluding these remarks on Anarchism, one is almost obliged to notice the charges that have been brought against the Jews by various violent Anti-Semites. If one were to believe in the theories concerning the Protocols, which were ventilated in the columns of the *Morning Post*, one would be obliged to think that the Jews were engaged all over the world in a vast conspiracy to overthrow Christianity and European civilization. According to Mrs. Webster, the French Revolution had nothing to do with the grievances and sufferings of the French peasantry, or the unfair incidence of taxation and the immunities enjoyed by the nobles and the great ecclesiastics, but was engineered entirely by the Illuminati and other anti-Christian Secret Societies. In like manner, the late overthrow of the Czar in Russia was, of course, in no way connected with his misuse of despotic power, but was entirely the work of ambitious Jews. The comfortable theory of reactionary Conservatives that revolutions are never due to misgovernment or tyranny, but are merely the result of wicked agitators, is one of the many permanent delusions of the Conservative Party in every country, and seems to be thoroughly believed even by its most intelligent members. It is no doubt true that the Jews in Russia took a prominent part in the Revolution of 1917, and also, unfortunately, a fact that many of the Jewish Commissars earned an unenviable notoriety in the executions and barbarities that took place in

the year which followed. The Jews had suffered much in the pogroms which had taken place so frequently under the old regime, and they revenged themselves in the revolution.

Trotsky is a Jew, and many of his satellites are of the same faith; but their power lies not in their religion but in their politics. The high percentage of Jews among the governing class of the Bolsheviks, is no doubt due to the superior capacity and cunning of the Jew as compared to the average mentality of the Russian peasant, or workman. But Bolshevism is not primarily a Jewish movement; still less does it form part of a large conspiracy to overthrow Christianity. Bolshevism is simply the form that revolution has taken in Russia. Still, inasmuch as Jews largely dominate the Bolshevistic policy, they are held accountable by the peasants for the ills under which they suffer, and it seems only too probable that any anti-Bolshevist reaction will be marked by a terrible pogrom against the Jews. Outside Russia it is, of course, absurd to say that there is a conspiracy among the Jews to destroy Christian civilization, or to pretend that a Capitalist like Sir Alfred Mond is in secret agreement with a Communist like Mr. Shinwell; this is simply anti-Semitism run mad. For Jews are divided on political questions, just as much as Christians; and certainly many of them are keenly opposed to all anarchical movements. As to how far the Jews are gaining an undue influence in our national life, and as to whether such influence in the Press, in the cinemas, and in plays is beneficial or not, is manifestly quite beyond the scope of this book.

LAUTHIER

In 1893 Servia was still a minor power; her victories over Turkey, and her emergence in 1919 as Jugo-Slavia, were still to come; so as a minor State of no great importance she only

paid her Ambassador at Paris a moderate salary. Such being the case, M. Georgevitch was dining modestly and inexpensively at the Duval restaurant, which he usually patronized, in the Avenue de l'Opera, on the evening of 13th November, 1893 He had just finished his dinner at about 8 p.m. and had risen to put on his overcoat, when a young man from another table sprang up and struck him in the chest with some sharp instrument. After executing his fell purpose the assassin fled from the restaurant and succeeded in effecting his escape. The unfortunate Minister at first felt no pain, and imagined that he was merely the victim of an audacious theft. But a moment later he saw the weapon still sticking in his chest; it was the blade of a shoemaker's awl. The wound was not deep, but internal haemorrhage set in, and he died a few days later. The blade was marked: "Fradère C. G. Marseille", and the hat left by the assassin had inside it the words: "Rue des Fabriques No. 4 Marseille". But all search was rendered unnecessary, for the culprit surrendered himself to the police at 11. p.m. that night. He had a high forehead, small eyes, and was somewhat short-sighted; his appearance suggested rather a clerk, or minor poet, than a desperate anarchist. At his examination he pretended that he had calculated the force of his blow and had had no intention of causing death; but, later, he expressed satisfaction at having secured an important personage. "I was lucky to get an ambassador. An ambassador is doubly a bourgeois."

The chief interest of this melancholy affair lies in the revelation of the psychology of the assassin in the curious letter which follows:

Dear Comrade:

I left Marseille in February, and after two months with my grandmother I arrived at Paris on the 20th of April. I found work almost at once as a shoemaker; but since September 21st

when I left my employer, not wishing to submit myself to the whims and eccentricities of such a bird, Society has obliged me to live in misery. I obtained some pairs of shoes to make, which just enabled me to exist, whilst getting into debt. But for the last few days, having nothing to do, and not a sou left, I am threatened to be turned out by my landlord. So you see my position is critical. I find myself obliged either to die of hunger or to commit suicide. Ah no! I will chose neither one nor the other; the first because food is not lacking since the shops are packed with articles, and I refuse the second alternative of suicide to escape the shame of being a coward. I leave to others the privilege of destroying themselves foolishly and uselessly. In fact what could be more stupid than to kill oneself rather than to take from the others who are the cause of it all? As for me, since I was 16 I have been an anarchist, or rather since then I have understood the benefits of anarchy; and now the time has arrived for me to show that a revolutionary is neither a coward nor a poltroon when face to face with the bourgeoisie, and I have made a firm resolution to avenge myself. As I cannot strike a notable blow like Ravachol I will avenge myself as best I can. My weapon will be my tool, but what of that? It will be only suitable that I should kill a bourgeois with the very weapon by which he exploits me. I should like to select a magistrate, but I have not the means, and further I know neither their appearance nor their address; but if I strike the first bourgeois I meet I shall not do amiss. Time is precious and it is likely that when you receive this letter I shall be in custody; nevertheless I count on you to defend me against these rascals, and the trial will give us a splendid opportunity to demonstrate the causes which influenced my action. I end in the hope of reckoning on the solidarity of our comrades, and I write with Blanqui, "No God, no Master" and I add "Long Live Anarchy"

Hurrah!

LÉLY LAUTHIER.

We see in this letter that the man is wholly given up to a violent hatred of the bourgeoisie, i.e., the rich or the middle class, and that he regards them as all equally guilty, and

therefore worthy of death. His only reward is to be that his trial will give him a splendid opportunity to air his principles, and appease his vanity.

THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT CARNOT

Ordinary persons are so interested in the internal history of France during the Revolution, especially in the executions that occurred during the Terror, that they fail to notice the extraordinary way in which the Committee of Public Safety overcame the external enemies of France.

In 1793, the French government had to face dangers not only from without, but also from within; the Spaniards were over the Pyrenees, the English and Austrians were menacing the northern frontiers, the Prussians were on the Rhine, and the Italians had invaded Provence. Within, Lyons was hostile, La Vendée was in full rebellion, and Toulon was in the hands of the English. Nothing but the greatest display of energy could cope with such a desperate situation. But the Terrorists were equal to the crisis; by the employment of ruthless cruelty and enormous energy, they succeeded in saving France from invasion. The English were defeated at Tourcoing, the Austrians at Watignies and Jemappes, the Prussians were driven back, and the Italians were expelled from Provence. The rebellion at Lyons was crushed with terrible severity, and young Bonaparte first gave signs of his future celebrity by the recapture of Toulon.

By the end of 1794 France was everywhere victorious on land. To whom was this extraordinary success chiefly due? Undoubtedly to the genius of the Minister for War, Lazare Nicolas Marguerite Carnot.

Of course, many other factors contributed to the victories of France; the enthusiasm of the French nation, the development of extraordinary energy among her generals due to the severity

with which failure was punished, and the incompetence of most of the Allied commanders.

Still, after all these factors have been considered, an enormous debt of gratitude is owed by France to the man who "organized victory". Unlike many of his colleagues in the Committees, Carnot would have become famous even if no Revolution had occurred, for he was well known as a very brilliant engineer officer before 1789. But the outbreak of the Revolution enabled him to display his genius on a wider field. He was an ardent Republican, and he voted for the execution of the King; moreover, his signature may be found on most of the lists of victims that stained with blood the period of the Terror.

By a singular paradox the very success of the Terrorists entailed the death of the Terror; for the severities of the Committee of Public Safety were only tolerated as a means to an end. The wonderful victories of Hoche and Pichegru, in 1794, brought Thermidor in their train, and at Thermidor Carnot sided with Billaud, and Collot d'Herbois against Robespierre, who had attempted to interfere with the War Minister's direction of the armies in the field.

With reference to Thermidor, many have wondered whether the cessation of the cruelties that marked the Reign of Terror was due to the fall of Robespierre, or not. Certainly his removal powerfully contributed to a more moderate policy, for though Billaud and Collot were equally cruel they lacked the lustre and authority that belonged to Robespierre.

If one were to make a list of the most cruel men among the Terrorists, the following dozen might be included:—Robespierre, St. Just, Couthon, Billaud, Collot d'Herbois, Fouquier Tinville, Carrier, Lebon, Voulland, Vadier. Hébert, and Marat. Carnot's prestige as an organizer of victory enabled him to escape punishment during the reaction which followed the overthrow of Robespierre. He became one of the Directory; and later,

Napoleon tried hard to induce him to take office under the Empire. As a stern republican he refused all such overtures, until he came forward in the hour of France's extremity to gain further distinction by his brilliant defence of Antwerp in 1814. He retired into exile after the Restoration of the Bourbons, and died at Magdebourg in 1823. His grandson, Marie Francois Sadi Carnot, was elected President in 1887, and succeeded in saving the Third Republic from shipwreck during the stormy days that marked the political intrigues of the notorious General Boulanger. In 1889 the President arranged for the removal of the remains of his illustrious grandfather from Magdebourg, and they were transferred to the Invalides with much pomp and ceremony.

Sadi Carnot was exceedingly popular, and in 1894 it was commonly supposed that France was once again free from anarchical outrages. At the very zenith of his career in June, 1894, the President left Paris, and journeyed south on one of his many successful tours through the Provinces; among other places he was to visit the Palais de Commerce at Lyons.

Meanwhile, far away in the South another man, Santo Ironimo Caserio, was travelling north towards the same city. Why was this obscure individual to be the means of terminating this brilliant career? Perhaps the inscrutable Nemesis of Destiny demanded satisfaction from the grandson for the hundreds of innocent victims who had perished by the guillotine during the time that the grandfather was a member of the Committee of Public Safety? This young Italian, though born of honest and respectable parents, had come under the pernicious influence of anarchical doctrines at the early age of eighteen. When only nineteen he was punished by the government for distributing pamphlets to the soldiers in which they were urged to desert. He had none of the ordinary vices of disreputable youths; for Caserio was not at all licentious, nor was he addicted to gambling or

alcohol. His faults lay deeper than those of ordinary dissipation. Like all anarchists he was a mass of savage egoism, insubordinate, devoid of affection, very vain, and singularly lacking in humour. His conversations in prison showed that he was easily deceived by any paradox or sophistry, and that he was very deficient in any sense of proportion, or sound judgement. He was above the average height, strong, muscular, lithe, and active. He had thick chestnut hair, a slight beard, and a brown moustache; his skin was dark and his face thin and pale. His ordinary expression was cross, and very determined. Like all anarchists he expected a great deal from life, and deemed himself worthy of wealth, and position. But as his parents could only afford to make him a journeyman baker, be became quickly disillusioned and disgusted. Having become an habitué of anarchist circles, he became very much enraged at the execution of Henri and Vaillant in 1892, and determined to avenge them. During the weak Presidency of M. Grèvy, nearly every murderer had escaped the guillotine, but M. Carnot had inaugurated a regime of greater severity. He was accordingly much hated by the anarchists, and young Caserio had probably many sympathizers amid their ranks when he set out from Nice to Lyons to execute his dread task of assassination. Having saved up a week's wages, he purchased for five francs a formidable dagger and sheath at a cutler's in Nice, and left by train for Tarascon. He alighted here, and for the sake of speed he travelled by the rapide First Class to Avignon, where he once again broke his journey. Finding that he had only twelve francs left he took a Third Class ticket, for 11 francs and 80 centimes, to Vienne. He alighted here again; and as he was now almost bereft of money he set out to walk to Lyons, a distance of 27 kilometres. Thus, these two were drawing nearer to each other on Life's Highway to meet in the embrace of Death; the well known and the unknown, and famous and the infamous, the President and the baker. Steadily and remorselessly Caserio plodded along the dusty highroad, asking his way in his broken

French. He had with his last centimes purchased a Lyons paper at Vienne, which detailed the whole programme of the President's movements at Lyons. He enveloped the dagger in a piece of newspaper, and replaced it in its damascened sheath in his coat pocket.

At last on that fateful Sunday evening of 24th June, 1894, Ironimo Caserio, tired and footsore, arrived on the outskirts of Lyons, the town which competes eagerly with Marseilles for the dignity of being the second largest town in France. He found his way at last to a large Avenue lined with spectators, who were patiently awaiting the arrival of their beloved President. He had dined at the Palais de Commerce at six, and he was due to reach the theatre for a performance ordered for nine o'clock. Caserio found himself on the wrong side of the road, and he made several futile attempts to cross over which were foiled on each occasion by the gendarmes. At length a body of some fifteen or sixteen people all crossed together, and the Italian, seizing his chance, went over with them. He was, of course, not allowed to remain in the front row, and for a time he had to content himself with a back place. At length, however, he worked himself into a good position in the second rank of spectators; he knew that the President would be seated on the right in the carriage; he saw that it would be easy to brush aside those immediately in front of him; and he awaited the event. A little before nine on that hot summer evening there came at last the long procession, the carriages, the mayor, the prancing cuirassiers, and now finally the carriage with the President wearing his crimson scarf over his evening dress. As the horses drew near, trotting proudly and slowly on their way, the Italian burst out of the crowd, drew out his dagger from his coat pocket, threw aside the sheath, and ran obliquely across the road to meet the President. Then, placing one hand on the carriage, he plunged the dagger up to the hilt into the breast of his victim. Since the paper with which the dagger had been covered adhered to his coat, many supposed

that Caserio had merely presented some petition to the President.

The assassin now crossed over to the left, and endeavoured to make his way through the spectators, so as to effect his escape. But a cry arose; and he was seized and arrested.

The unfortunate President was taken to a house and received all the care and attention that medical science could give, but it was useless; he expired after a few hours of agony.

In the trial that followed, Caserio was asked why he had come to France to kill her President when he could more easily have assassinated the King of Italy; he replied that he could not kill King Humbert because he knew him so well by sight. He explained by a gesture how he had seized the carriage with his left hand and struck the President with his right. The only time his face showed any emotion was when he added, "He looked at me". That one reproachful look of the victim had alone touched the heart of the assassin.

During his stay in prison he ate his meals and smoked his cigarettes with enjoyment; but he would not admit that he had any associates in his crime, and replied stolidly "No" to nearly every interrogation that was put to him. In fact, up to the actual day of the execution he seemed dull and apathetic, save when he argued concerning the vices of the rich, when his eyes would flash with a ferocious glare. He showed great timidity at his execution; he never spoke during the preliminary toilet, and he had to be dragged to the guillotine. So perished Marie Francois Sadi Carnot, and Santo Ironimo Caserio, in June, 1894.

But political murderers are to be found not only amongst those who attack authority, but also among those who misuse it; there are cruel tyrants as well as cruel anarchists. Indeed, all life whether social or political should be a compromise, since true wisdom consists in following the golden mean between

the two extremes. Excessive prudence paralyses initiative, but undue impulsiveness must end in disaster; inordinate economy means parsimony, but boundless generosity is foolish extravagance. Just so an excess of authority savours of tyranny, whilst unrestrained liberty leads to license. Extremes too often meet, and many of the satellites of the Bolshevik Cheka are recruited from the Secret Police of the Czardom. The British Empire owes its success to the justice and moderation of her true Statesmen, not to the unwise vigour of extremists. The cautious diplomacy of a Lord Durham in Canada was far more valuable than the harsh zeal of an Eyre or an O'Dwyer. The cautious foresight of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill in 1886, would have been far better than the complete surrender made by the Coalition in 1922. Excessive harshness is by no means always a sign of strength, it is far more often the outcome of panic and weakness. Quite recently the action of General Dyer at Amritsar was a typical instance of the misuse of authority. Certainly the period of the Great War was one of great strain and anxiety in India, as elsewhere; but the Indian Government was still strong enough to act with justice and humanity. Amritsar, the headquarters of the Sikh religion, had recently been the scene of some anti-European riots in which banks had been burnt, two Europeans killed, and several ladies insulted. General Dyer, an advocate of severity, was sent from Lahore to reassert the authority of government. Hearing that a large meeting of Indians was about to be held in the public gardens, he prohibited its taking place by means of criers. Many villagers, of course, never heard of this prohibition, and several thousand Indians flocked to the meeting. On receiving information of this flouting of his authority, General Dyer marched down to the ground with a company of Gurkhas. He drew up his men in such a way as best to command the crowd, and then forthwith opened fire upon them. Many threw themselves upon the ground, others frantically fought for the exit; but the firing continued

till some two thousand were slaughtered—in fact until the ammunition was all but exhausted. This crowd was unarmed save for sticks; nor was any attack made upon the troops. In this way did Dyer sustain the authority of government, and forfeit the trust of Indians in the humanity of the British government. General Dyer expressed no regret for his conduct, but rather plumed himself in having saved India by his strong handling of the situation, and his answers before the Commission of Inquiry were unsatisfactory and even insolent.

Though the General was retired, and though his conduct was censured by the House of Commons, many approved of his action. Not only was his conduct praised by several Government officials, but it received approval even from chaplains and missionaries—thus showing that Christianity goes by the board when confronted by self-interest and racial prejudice. The same spirit that made clergy preach in defence of slavery in America still exists, and once a matter becomes political, there seems to be absence of any hope of humanity, or even logic. All sentiments of justice or reason seem to be swept away by blind prejudice and bastard patriotism. Ever since the experience of the despotism of Cromwell's major-generals, English Law has always been very jealous of the military, and the right of the military to intervene has been very carefully hedged round and circumscribed. The military cannot act at all until the Riot Act has been read, and only that amount of force may be used which may be sufficient to achieve its purpose. Firing should only be employed as a last resource, and it should only continue as long as it may be necessary. General Dyer, by his headstrong conduct, broke all these canons of constitutional theory, and, by his ill-judged and harsh action, showed himself quite unfit to hold any responsible command. More than one hundred years ago, in the bad old reactionary days of old-fashioned Toryism and the rule of the aristocracy, a governor was hanged for flogging one man to death; under our present

enlightened and idealistic system of up-to-date democracy, the death of two thousand Indians was only punished by retirement on half-pay! Is our vaunted Progress real, or is it mechanical rather than moral?

THE DEATH OF SERGEANT ARMSTRONG FROM FLOGGING

Goree is a very small islet three miles from the Coast of Africa near Cape Verde. It is only 900 yards in length and 330 in breadth, and most of it consists of barren rock. Formerly, however, it was a much coveted spot on account of the facilities that it offered as a trading centre. In consequence of this fact, like so many colonial possessions, the place often changed hands, and was sometimes Dutch, sometimes English, and sometimes French. Subsequently the island became of less importance owing to its trade passing to Dakkar on the mainland. Though more healthy than the mainland, Goree was never a favourite station; in fact troops were often sent here as a punitive measure. So that with no Society, a difficult garrison, and an unhealthy climate, Goree was not sought after by aspirants for governorships in our colonial possessions. When the post fell vacant, however, during our struggle with America and France in 1779, Joseph Wall was very glad to obtain the post of Governor. Born at Dublin in 1737, the son of a prosperous Irish farmer, Wall went for a short time to the University; but more fond of adventure than study he became a cadet in the British Army in 1760. He was the typical Irish military adventurer, six feet four inches in height, handsome, bold, insinuating, and pugnacious; the very image of Thackeray's Barry Lyndon. He distinguished himself at the capture of Havannah from the Spaniards in 1762, and was made a Captain at the Peace of Paris in 1763. After this he learnt a lesson which should have taught him how

unjustly power can be used by a superior; for he was wrongly imprisoned in Africa and succeeded in gaining a thousand pounds in a civil suit against his oppressor. Like a true Irish adventurer he came to Ireland to hunt for an heiress; but in the ardour of his pursuit he paid such rough court to a Miss Gregory, whom he met by chance at an inn, that he was sued for assault and obliged to pay a fine. During this period of his career Wall fought several duels, and in one of them he killed a relative. Finding Ireland rather too hot for him he crossed over to England, where he got into good society; but he wasted much of his time in gaming and amorous intrigues. Thanks to his handsome presence, however, he wooed and won Frances, a daughter of Lord Fortrose, and owing to the backing of powerful friends he had acquired sufficient influence with Government to secure his nomination as Governor of Goree, and Colonel Commandant of the garrison.

Elated with his newly won position he gave a significant foretaste of his regime as Governor by causing a man to be so badly flogged on the voyage out that he died soon afterwards; he was, as it were, getting his hand in for his tenure of office at Goree His brother, Patrick Wall, who was going out with him as Ensign, was so shocked at this barbarity that he died soon afterwards After two years of unpopular rule at Goree, Wall desired to return to England to restore his health, which was suffering from the climate. The troops were in the habit of receiving certain stores and rations in ships that arrived from England, but it happened that these stores were often delayed. Since the Governor and Paymaster were to leave the island in two days' time, the men were anxious for a settlement prior to this event taking place. So, on 10th July, 1782, a deputation of about a couple of dozen soldiers, headed by a certain Sergeant, Benjamin Armstrong, set out to interview the Paymaster. They were met by the Governor, who ordered them back to barracks. Two hours later a second party of them, with Armstrong

at their head, again set out to seek the Commissary. Unfortunately they once again encountered the Governor, who again ordered them to return to barracks. The Governor declared that they numbered some sixty or seventy and that their conduct and demeanour was insolent, and unruly; but others declared that Armstrong was quite deferential and that he saluted and addressed Wall as "His Excellency". That evening, however, at six o'clock, the long roll call was heard on the drums, a gun carriage was hauled out, and the whole garrison was drawn up on the Parade ground. Armstrong was arrested and charged with mutiny. No evidence was heard and no proper court martial was held; but the Sergeant was stripped, tied to the gun carriage, and ordered to receive 800 lashes. We may well be indignant at the severity of the sentence, but, unfortunately, such sentences were by no means uncommon in these days; in fact, there have been instances of a far larger number of lashes being inflicted. Contrary to Regulations he ordered the flogging to be administered by the black interpreters in lieu of the drummers, and the use of a rope's end instead of a cat of nine tails—according to the doctor's evidence this made the punishment much more severe and dangerous.

One can picture the scene on that July evening on that desolate piece of rock. The sullen troops, indignant but restrained by the habit of discipline, the surgeon too timid to protest, the officers overawed by the tall resolute figure of the blustering governor. They all stand there silhouetted against the tropical sun, which beats pitilessly on them all on that sweltering summer day. And there, in the centre, the unhappy sergeant tied to the gun carriage and imploring mercy as the pitiless rope tears his flesh. The frightened interpreters are urged on and threatened by the Governor, who keeps crying out: "Cut him to the liver, cut him to the heart". By twenty-five at a time the whole barbarous number of 800 lashes is inflicted, until the wretched prisoner, with his back one bleeding black mass of blood and

lacerated flesh, is untied and led off to hospital. The doctor from the very first had no hope of his recovery, and in a few hours he expired.

Two days later the Governor left for home, taking three of his officers with him, hoping no doubt to hear no more of his butcher's work at Goree. On his return, some complaints were lodged against him in connection with Armstrong's death, and some other matters by a certain Captain Roberts; but as the other witnesses were believed to have been drowned the matter was allowed to drop. But on the unexpected arrival of the missing ship with the necessary witnesses, messengers were sent to arrest the ex-governor. He was apprehended at Bath, and conveyed in a post-chaise as far as Reading, when he managed to give his captors the slip. A reward of £200 was promised by a proclamation issued on the 8th March, 1784, for his apprehension; but Wall had already escaped to the Continent. He lived abroad for many years and was once again fortunate enough to get received into very good Society, both in France and Italy. Wearying of exile, however, he returned to England in 1797, and lived quietly with his wife in London as Mr. and Mrs. Thompson. Emboldened by the idea that nearly all the witnesses of the affair were dead, he wrote to the Home Secretary (28th October, 1801) announcing his wish to stand his trial; and had he not taken this very imprudent course he would most probably have been suffered to die in peace, but now that he forced himself on the attention of government he was arrested at his house in Upper Thornhaugh Street, in Bedford Square.

The trial took place at the Old Bailey, on the 20th January, 1802, before Judge Macdonald. Wall himself addressed the court, and his defence was conducted by Newman Knowlys. The chief witnesses against him were the doctor, and the Orderly Sergeant who had witnessed the flogging; all the other officers had died. The defence was unable to sustain the allegation of mutiny. Wall excused his fleeing from justice by stating that

prejudice at that time was so strong against him that he had despaired of a fair hearing. The trial lasted from 9 a.m. till 11 p.m., when a verdict of guilty was declared against him, and he was sentenced to death. Great efforts were now made by his wife's relatives to secure a reprieve. Charles Howard, the 10th Duke of Norfolk, in particular exerted all his influence to that end with the Privy Council. Twice he was respited and twice or three times the Privy Council met specially to consider his fate. Possibly he might have secured a reprieve but for the fact that popular feeling ran high against him; it may have been thought impolitic to pardon a wealthy man for an abuse of authority when hundreds of humble sailors were suffering the penalty of death for mutiny at Spithead.

Be that as it may, the government left him to his fate From a contemporary account we hear of Wall's appearance in the condemned cell—no longer the tall commanding figure that had looked so imperious on the parade ground of Goree, as flushed with wine that summer evening he had shouted to the Africans "Cut him to the liver!", but a pale shivering mortal, who begs Dr. Forde, the chaplain, to have his thongs less tightly bound and inquires anxiously: "Do tell me, sir, is the drop very quick or not?" He is very penitent and takes a reverent part in the mournful service. But when Forde inquired as to what sort of troops had been sent to him at Goree, he replied: "Well, sir, the very riff-raff," which was probably true. As the tall hat supplied was too small for him, it had to be flattened down upon his head. He had two white handkerchiefs; one he bound round his forehead, and the other he carried between his hands. Under the hat, too, he placed a white skull cap; he wore blue breeches and white silk stockings.

As executions at Tyburn had ceased in 1783, he was spared the terrible ordeal that Lord Ferrers underwent when, owing to the frequent stoppages caused by the howling crowds, the

journey from Newgate to the Marble Arch took no less than three hours. He had but to step up from the debtor's prison on to the platform outside As soon as the prisoner appeared, however, the vast crowd outside set up a howl of execration. and exhibited the same ferocious joy as they had shown at the execution of Mrs. Brownrigg for flogging her apprentice to death. With some futile idea of screening himself the unhappy man drew the handkerchief further down over his eyes, and the next instant the bolt was drawn that launched him into eternity.

In England, capital punishment has been administered by the axe, by fire, and by hanging, and for a very short period by immersion in boiling water. This last barbarous method was only in vogue during the reign of that cruel tyrant Henry VIII. The axe was generally reserved for persons of rank; the last to suffer in this way being Lord Lovat, who was executed for his share in the Rebellion of the young Pretender in 1747. Death by fire was awarded to women who killed their husbands; the last instance of such a barbarity occurring in 1789! But the ordinary method of punishment has been hanging, which was very generally employed in Georgian days for all sorts of offences, and the favourite spot for such executions was Tyburn.

At Tyburn the method of hanging was for the prisoner to be attached by a rope round his neck to the gallows, and for the cart to be open at the back, so that when the horse moved forward he was literally "turned" off and left hanging in the air. But from the time that capital punishments took place at Newgate, there was a new arrangement. The criminal was placed upon a platform, the rope adjusted, and by the drawing of a bolt he was left to hang by his neck and so die from strangulation. Since 1874, death is effected by breaking the spinal column by a sudden jerk; this is effected by allowing such a length of drop as may be in proportion to the weight

of the criminal, so as to rupture the spinal ligatures. Executions take place at 8 a.m. on the first Monday after the lapse of three Sundays from the day of the condemnation. It is difficult to say whether Wall was justly condemned; for if the essence of murder is intent to kill, it is not likely that the Governor really meant to kill Armstrong; on the other hand, he showed a brutal callousness concerning the probable consequences of his barbarity.

CHAPTER V

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EVERY profession has its Great Masters, and William Palmer can claim the proud position of the Prince of Poisoners. He was so expeditious in his methods, so impartial in his choice of victims, and at once so ruthless, and so business-like in his execution, that he has far out-distanced all other modern competitors, and even threatened the supremacy of the Marquise de Brinvilliers, of seventeenth century fame. In about ten years he killed four legitimate, and three illegitimate children, three boon-companions, a wife, a mother-in-law, an uncle, and a mother, besides attempting to kill three or four others. His procedure did not lack system; for he appears to have divided his relatives into three classes—those dependent upon himself, those that had property, and those that were comparatively poor.

The first he murdered because he was too mean to maintain them; the second so that he might inherit their property; and the third to get the insurance money, having first prudently insured their lives for large sums in his own favour. He committed, in addition, a few other murders in a casual fashion from sheer exuberance of ferocity. His four legitimate and three illegitimate children he murdered between 1848 and 1854; he had discovered a method of causing them to die in convulsions and fits. He was much assisted in his misdeeds by the imbecility and credulity of old Dr. Bamford, an octogenarian, who seemed to believe everything that Palmer told him.

His father, who had started in quite humble circumstances as a wood-sawyer, had managed to amass a fortune of £70,000 by robbing the Marquis of Anglesey of his best timber. He was enabled to practise this wholesale theft of trees owing to the connivance of the steward, who was carrying on an intrigue with Palmer's wife, née Sarah Bentley, a woman of very bad character.

He came, in fact, from a tainted stock, and both as a boy and as a youth he exhibited a dishonest disposition. He was dismissed from his first situation in Liverpool for dishonestly tampering with the correspondence; and at home he was frequently caught stealing money from his sisters. In spite of this bad record and his subsequent infamous career, his old mother exclaimed in later years: "Yes, they hanged my poor saintly Bill, though he was the best of the whole bunch!"—not very complimentary to the rest of the family, which included a brother in Holy Orders. It was decided that this promising lad should follow Medicine as his career, and he became, for five years, Assistant to a Dr. Tylecote at Haywood.

It is said, though it seems hardly credible, that during his time here he had illegitimate children by no less than 14 different women! In 1844 he walked Stafford Infirmary as a Medical Student; and during this period he is suspected of having poisoned, for a mere freak, a man called Abbey during a drinking wager. In 1846, with much difficulty and little credit, he took his degree at Bartholomew Hospital as M.R.C.S., and in the same year he secured a certain amount of property by marrying Annie Brookes, the illegitimate daughter of a retired Anglo-Indian Colonel. In 1847 he settled at Rugeley and started to practise as a doctor in that town. The author is well acquainted with Palmer's house, in the principal street just opposite the "Talbot Arms", as he was often entertained in it by the Timmis family in 1891, and he has even had the

dubious privilege of sitting in the doctor's favourite arm-chair.

Like most criminals, William Palmer lacked real ability and perseverance, and proved a poor doctor; in fact, he was soon quite ready to make over his patients to a man named Thirlby, and devote himself entirely to the more congenial pursuits of gambling and horse-racing. For this latter purpose he maintained for some time a stud of 16 horses on Cannock Chase. He had inherited £8,000 from his father, and his mother gave him £2,000 more, but all this was soon swallowed up in stupid extravagance.

Whilst qualifying as a doctor in the Metropolis, Palmer seems to have abstained from murder; probably he did not feel himself really at home in the South; just as a tiger loves his jungle so Palmer felt more fit for business in his native air. Nor did he commence his regular career as a wholesale poisoner till he had settled down at Rugeley in 1847. The first victim that he selected was his mother-in-law, from whom his wife had expectations.

Mary Thornton had acted for many years as housekeeper to a retired Anglo-Indian, a certain Colonel Brookes, who had left her a good deal of property. To own property that would devolve on Palmer, or his wife, was, however, a certain death warrant to all who might accept their hospitality. The poor woman realized her danger, for she said on at last consenting to visit him: "I do not think I shall live a month." Her prophecy was too optimistic; she lived only ten days; for Palmer was nothing if not expeditious. From this murder he secured £3,000 and some houses. She was buried in Rugeley churchyard on 18th January, 1849, where two of his children already lay. Two more of his legitimate children soon followed, and by 1854 he had killed all his four legitimate children. He grudged the money necessary for their keep; for he was a stern economist in domestic matters.

His next adult victims were Bladon and Bly, who were betting friends and boon-companions. In these two cases he had not insured their lives, but simply murdered them to steal whatever money they might have upon them, and evade his own obligations. Bladon had had the misfortune to win a large bet from Palmer—a very dangerous proceeding. For Palmer had found in poison the *deus ex machina* that was to free him from all troubles, an unfailing solvent for all his difficulties. After killing him, Palmer stole the £600 he had in his belt, and destroyed his betting book; and as usual he went through the farce of securing a death certificate for apoplexy from complaisant old Bamford.

On the arrival of Mrs. Bladon he explained that the deceased's betting book was missing, and that as an old friend he would be glad to pay the funeral expenses—as indeed he well might out of his victim's money. This fiction of the missing betting book was Palmer's invariable procedure, and he employed it in the cases of Bly and Cook. At first the widow was favourably impressed by Palmer's genial and insinuating manners, till by accident she noticed a very curious expression on his face reflected in a mirror when his back was towards her. Then when he pretended that Bladon died owing him £70, the widow at once replied: "Why, I saw a letter of yours in which you asked for more time to repay a debt of £200". She refused to acknowledge any debt to Palmer, and left his house unhurt; for he never assaulted anybody, because he relied entirely on the more cowardly method of poisoning his victims. But if crimes like his have worse or better, his most cowardly and detestable murder was that of his wife. Having murdered her mother and all her children, and debauched all her servants, he resolved to sacrifice her, too, to his insatiable greed; so in January, 1854, he insured her life for £13,000. For the sake of appearances he waited till he had paid the first premium of £450, and then killed her slowly by the careful

administration of small doses of poison; and yet some people would abolish capital punishment! The Society paid the insurance money without demur, and the human tiger, having gorged himself with booty, soon looked round for another victim.

In 1854, too, he tried to insure his drunken brother Walter for £84,000, but the Insurance Societies hesitated at so large a sum; for one of them had received a very significant hint from a Dr. Waddell, a much shrewder man than Bamford, Jones, or Knight: "Be cautious; he insured his wife for £13,000, and after the first premium she died". In consequence of this warning Palmer failed to secure the insurance for £84,000; but he did succeed in effecting one for £15,000. Knowing his brother to be a great drunkard, he gave him £100 to spend on alcohol, and a man to act as a kind of bottle-holder to keep him always tipsy. But this method proving too slow with such a well-seasoned vessel, Palmer once again resorted to his never failing remedy.

It is known that before meeting his brother at the Shrewsbury Races he had not neglected to provide himself with a bottle of prussic acid; but it is not quite certain whether Walter Palmer died from poison or from alcohol. In either case he died by the acts of William Palmer, who at once applied for the insurance money. But the Society refused to pay at once, and raised various difficulties. Palmer then tried to insure George Bate, the superintendent of his stable boys; but this too failed. The insurance business was, in point of fact, played out.

It was about this time, too, that he challenged his uncle, old Bean Bentley, to a drinking bout, which proved fatal; for this sexual degenerate died three days later—whether from the brandy alone, or from poison in it, it was never accurately known—but Palmer had a whimsical predilection for brandy as the medium of death. One of the few people who ever escaped

his clutches was his step-aunt, another of the Bentleys, who very cautiously abstained from taking some pills he had given her, but tried them first on some chickens. The results were so alarming that she left his house next day with prudent expedition, and so saved her life.

But in 1855, in spite of all his murders, thefts, forgeries, and loans, Palmer was in desperate financial straits.

His two chief creditors, Pratt in London and Padwick in Birmingham, were growing anxious about their money; for the interest was no longer being punctually paid. In fact, on 6th November he owed £11,500 to Pratt, and £4,000 to Padwick; and on that date writs had been issued against him, and against his mother. These writs were being suspended over his head like the sword of Damocles, to be served unless in a very few days he could discharge his obligations. Palmer knew that once the writs were actually served his mother would discover the forgery of her name, and he would be a ruined man.

When, therefore, on 14th November he met his friend, John Parsons Cook, at the Raven Inn, where they were both staying in order to attend the Shrewsbury Races, he doubtless intended to rob and poison him. This young man of 28 had been intended for the Law, but a legacy of £12,000 had diverted him from his studies to the dubious pursuits of a racing man.

It was at the "Raven" that Mrs. Brookes, an early Victorian New Woman, who made her living as a bookmaker and tipster, saw Palmer looking curiously at some white liquid in a tumbler, in a passage outside Cook's room. Soon afterwards he offered a drink of brandy and water to Cook, who complained that it burnt his throat. There remained a very small quantity—about a teaspoonful—in the glass, and this Palmer boldly drank, exclaiming: "It is quite all right; I can taste nothing amiss"; and he appealed to Fisher and

Herring, who were in the room drinking with them, to corroborate his statement. "How can we tell," said Fisher. "There is none left now." But poor Cook, who had drunk half a tumbler of it, was violently sick for some hours, and complained to Fisher that "he believed that damned Palmer had drugged him".

On the preceding day at the Races Palmer had proved unlucky in his bets, as indeed he generally was; for swindlers like Palmer or Bottomley are not often shrewd in their speculations; but Cook had won a considerable sum by the victory of his horse Polestar. On 15th November, Cook and Palmer went off together to Rugeley, and the former took up his quarters at the "Talbot Arms", immediately opposite the doctor's house. The events of the next few days have been so often minutely described that a brief résumé of the important facts will suffice. The poisons employed to murder Cook were antimony and strychnine, and they were administered in coffee, broth, and pills. Nearly every time that anything was given to the patient by Palmer, Cook was violently sick, and on two occasions he suffered terrible agony. Palmer procured the *nux vomica* (strychnine) from two separate chemists, Newton and Roberts, getting three grains from one, and six from the other. The senile old fool, Bamford, was also in attendance, and at the end a Dr. Jones was also called in; for Palmer seems to have had such a low opinion of the intelligence or common sense of his professional brethren that he did not fear detection. At the last, Cook protested against taking any more pills, but Palmer insisted upon it. At about 11 o'clock on the Tuesday night of 21st November, all the house was once again aroused by terrible screams, and Cook implored Jones to send for Palmer. The maid, Elizabeth Mills, who had herself suffered from taking a little of some broth that had come out of the sick-room, stated that the doctor came out in about two minutes from when she first summoned him from the

street. In fact, of course, the cruel fiend had never taken his clothes off, but had waited in comfortable anticipation of the fatal effects of his poison. These effects in the case of death from strychnine are very terrible to watch, as they cause the sufferer intense agony. This poison acts on the nerves and causes dreadful spasms and contractions; till in its final stages the body of the patient is bent like a bow, resting only on the heels and the back of the head. After a few minutes of mortal agony Cook passed away, and the doctor was soon seen rummaging in his pockets and under his pillow. Two days before, during his illness, he had run up to London and instructed Herring (afterwards the celebrated millionaire) to collect Cook's winnings at Tattersall's, and pay certain debts of his own to Pratt and Padwick. He now, too, evidently possessed himself of about £600 in ready money that Cook had won at Shrewsbury, and also, according to his usual practice, he destroyed Cook's betting book in order to make a false and impudent claim of an imaginary debt of £400 as owing to him by the dead man.

He induced Bamford to sign a death certificate as due to apoplexy, and had already ordered a good stout oak coffin for the funeral.

But Palmer had reached his Waterloo, for at this juncture fate intervened in the person of a Mr. Stephens, poor Cook's stepfather and one who was sincerely attached to him. Coming from London, Stephens was free from the strange influences of that little midland town that seemed to guard the local doctor from attack. He received all Palmer's genial advances with cold suspicion and stood on the defensive. Blackguards can usually get their way with the weak, or with the corrupt; but they are helpless when confronted by a strong and honest man. They can neither intimidate him, nor bribe him into silence. When Stephens saw poor Cook's clenched hands, and noted how eager Palmer was to press forward the funeral, he suddenly

announced his intention of demanding a post-mortem. For the first time Palmer began to feel uneasy, but on being told by Newton that when a dog died of strychnine there was no inflammation to be found in the dead animal's stomach, he soon recovered his usual high spirits and snapped his fingers gaily. But his guilty fears were again raised when Dr. Harland stated that he understood that there was some suspicion of poison. "Oh, dear no," exclaimed Palmer, "he had fits; you will find old-seated disease of the heart; also he had a diseased throat from syphilis." During the examination he did his best to cause Dr. Devonshire, the operating surgeon, to make a serious incision in the stomach by suddenly pushing him; and later, when all the bowels had been placed in a sealed jar, he endeavoured to make away with it. Failing in this, he endeavoured to bribe the post-boy with a ten pound note to overturn the fly that was to carry Mr. Stephens and the jar to the station. He even tried to bribe the coroner into bringing in a verdict of death from natural causes, but all his tricks and devices proved vain and he was arrested and charged with wilful murder, on the 14th of December. As there was a great deal of local feeling, a special bill was passed quickly through Parliament to allow of the trial taking place at London instead of at Stafford, and he was duly tried accordingly at the Old Bailey in May, 1856.

The trial lasted from 14th May till the 27th of that month —a very long period for a criminal case; but every detail, both for the prosecution and defence, was gone into with meticulous care, as the whole country was interested in the result. The judges were Baron Alderson and Justice Cresswell; the Attorney-General led for the Crown and Mr. Shee for the defence.

Meanwhile, in the dock stood the prisoner, apparently one of the least concerned in the whole Court. William Palmer, though he looked older, was only 31 years of age, and had a

very ordinary appearance. He was a short stout person with a round head and face, scanty hair of a sandy colour, a clean and open countenance, and a ruddy complexion. His expression was mean and commonplace, and there was nothing in the man, save his steelly blue eyes, to indicate cruelty or cunning.

His demeanour in the dock was calm and composed, and he took elaborate notes of the evidence. The Attorney-General, Sir. A. Cockburn, conducted the prosecution in a most masterly fashion, and showed very clearly the motive for the murder, the opportunities of the prisoner, and the undoubted fact that Cook had died from the effects of poison, and that though no strychnine had been discovered, yet all the symptoms of the death clearly proved death from that poison. For had Cook died from lock-jaw he would have not been able to swallow so easily, nor would there have been such continuous vomiting. Shee, who also spoke very well, relied chiefly on the absence of strychnine in the stomach, and the circumstantial character of the evidence; he even went so far as to express his private conviction of Palmer's innocence. The evidence of Sir Benjamin Brodie and Mr. Taylor, the experts on poison, coupled with the other factors in the case, proved fatal to the prisoner, and he was sentenced to be hanged at Stafford. Palmer, who during the long absence of the jury from 2.18 till 4.24 had cherished the hope of being acquitted, remarked after the verdict: "It was the riding that did it"; by which he did not, as some well-meaning but foolish moralists have supposed, attribute his downfall to betting, but to the clever speech of the Crown Lawyer which had led to his conviction.

For a time in gaol he refused to eat, and continued to say: "I shall go to the scaffold a murdered man", because he still hoped for a reprieve; for like nearly all murderers he was of an optimistic temperament.

He continued to profess his innocence till the actual hour

of execution, when, on being pressed by the chaplain, the Rev. Goodacre, he remarked: "If it is necessary to save my soul to confess, I ought also to confess about my wife and my brother". But he died without making any real confession of the murder of Cook (14th June, 1856)—one of the most cruel murderers that has ever disgraced the name of an Englishman —a man that justifies the great dramatist Shakespeare in his delineation of such human monsters as Iago and Aaron the Moor.

But what of the moral and intellectual tone of Rugeley in those far off Crimean War days? What can we say of the intellectual calibre of Dr. Bamford, or Knight, or Jones? Were they blind to the evident signs of death from poison? What was Palmer's estimate of the coroner, that he could send him a ten pound note and a present of game with a request to find a verdict of death from natural causes in the case of Cook? What do we think of the Rugeley postmaster, who tampers with the letters to suit the convenience of this murderer?

How can we regard the wife, who sees her children all killed, and her servants seduced, her mother murdered, and consents to forge the name of her mother-in-law to satisfy the insatiable greed of her ferocious mate? Is she terrified, or infatuated? What can we think of Dr. Tylecote, who retained for five years as his assistant a young debauchee who seduced more than fourteen of his female patients? How is it that Palmer should imagine that he can bribe the post-boy to upset the vehicle conveying the jar containing the suspected intestines to the public analyst? We may ask many more questions of this nature; and the answer can only, alas! be found in the deplorable moral condition of this little Midland town at that time.

No wonder they asked Lord Palmerston, the Premier,

for permission to change the name of the place, and he, with characteristic wit, replied: "Certainly; call it after me—'Palmerstown'". It was only the healthy resoluteness of Mr. Stephens, Cook's stepfather, which came like a moral tonic into this sleepy place which led to Palmer's arrest, trial, and execution. No doubt the passivity of his fellow townsmen was also largely due to Palmer's reckless prodigality, for the murderer distributed largess with a liberal hand, and also entertained with a lavish hospitality. A little judicious bribery will often enable a criminal to avoid unpleasant complications, and in order to live illegally they are often forced to pay heavy blackmail. A blackmailer's scoundrelism is often only equalled by the villainy of his victim.

This type of stout jovial criminal of apparent joviality and good nature will often easily deceive people: such a man was Henry VIII, such, too, was Horatio Bottomley; though, of course, both men were much superior to Palmer; still, they resembled him in a certain bluff heartiness of manner that easily imposes on the credulous—like Caesar, people are on their guard against the lean and hungry Cassius type; but they easily become the dupes of fat specious blackguards, who stand one drinks and make good jokes—no doubt, too, such men often possess remarkable hypnotic power which makes their victims act in a way contrary to their better judgement.

It is in this occult power of suggestion that lies the secret of many strange events in human affairs—a power which is being studied and exploited by our modern Psycho-Analysts.

Another puzzling question is the foolish but pathetic way in which poor Cook, whenever he was in great agony, at once asked that Palmer might be summoned. Had he no suspicion of this man? He had told Fisher that he thought that Palmer

had drugged his brandy at the "Raven"; why, then, was he now so trustful at Rugeley? This phenomenon in poisoning cases is very usual, and seems to point to some hypnotic influence that the poisoner acquires over the sufferer, similar to the fascination that the snake possesses over the bird.

CHAPTER VI

TRAIN MURDERERS

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MURDERS committed in a train have always excited great public interest; for nearly everybody is interested, because nearly everybody at some time or other travels by train. So that, whenever the murderer in such cases is not detected, there arises a great outcry against the police. This is, however, very unfair, because in many cases detection is almost impossible. Moreover, it must be remembered that our police have to work under great difficulties. They have not the same rights of search as are possessed by the French police, nor are they aided in their investigations by preliminary interviews between the suspected man and the magistrate—English law is very jealous of the rights of the individual, and even insists on the policeman cautioning the prisoner as to any statement he may wish to volunteer. Our rules of evidence, too, which shut out all hearsay statements, generally make in favour of the accused, so that in many cases the police have actually arrested the criminal, but he is released owing to the lack of conclusive proof.

The most difficult crimes to trace are those committed by assassins who were complete strangers to the victim, as is often the case in train murders. If an arrest is not made almost immediately, it is only too probable that the murderer will escape, as occurred when the unfortunate Miss Camp, a barmaid at Waterloo Station, was killed in the four minutes' run between Putney and Wandsworth; and again in the murder of the nurse in the Merthsham tunnel. The apprehension of

Lefroy was made easy owing to the desperate resistance offered by Mr. Gold in a struggle which lasted for at least twenty minutes. For not only was Lefroy covered with blood and scratches, but poor Gold's watch-chain was protruding from his boot when the murderer alighted at Preston Station.

Muller, who murdered Mr. Briggs near Hackney, was detected owing to his leaving his hat in the compartment.

In reality, railway travelling is extraordinarily safe in England when one compares the enormous number that travel with the insignificant few who suffer from accident or crime. Indeed, assaults, thefts, and murders are far more frequent in France, where the Mediterranean line in particular bears an unenviable notoriety.

The two cases that follow are interesting from a psychological point of view, since they illustrate the optimism and audacity of the criminal mind in a very marked degree. The first case, too, is remarkable from the fact that the murder was done in the presence of a third party, who herself narrowly shared the fate of the victim. As it is, of course, very rarely that a murder is committed in the presence of anybody, nearly all convictions are secured by what is called circumstantial evidence, and it is only in rare cases like the following that we can learn of what actually took place, from the lips of a survivor of the tragedy.

THE VAUXHALL MURDER

On the early afternoon of Thursday, 17th January, in the year 1901, a certain Mrs. Rhoda King took a Third-Class ticket at Southampton with the intention of alighting at Vauxhall, and from there making her way to the house of her sister, who was living in Battersea. She left her husband at work and her children at home, and set out alone on her

journey by the 1.40 express. Her mind was probably occupied by small domestic matters, and with the condition in which she should find her sister; certainly no idea of the dreadful tragedy of which she was so shortly to be a spectator ever crossed her mind for a single second. Why should it? Western life is so well ordered, and all our needs and desires are so carefully catered for and met—nobody thinks of murder as a possibility in everyday life; it may be mentioned in the newspapers, it may happen to other people, but not to ourselves. Murder is, in fact, as Mrs. Belloc Lowndes picturesquely put it, the one chink in the armour of civilization for which no provision is ever made.

Mrs. King was alone till the train reached Eastleigh, but here she was joined by a fine young fellow, over six feet in height, and of a very powerful build. After another quarter of an hour Winchester was reached, and a third person entered the compartment—Mr. William Pearson, a well-to-do farmer. All the characters for the fatal drama were now complete, and the express started on its long run from Basingstoke to Vauxhall. George Parker, who sat with a revolver in his pocket watching the unconscious farmer, was only 23 years of age, but he had lived long enough in the world to do a good deal of mischief. He had been dismissed from the Army, committed a theft at the Lyceum Theatre for which the police were then searching for him, and just recently he had separated on Eastleigh platform from a married woman with whom he had been carrying on an intrigue for some days. He was desperately in need of money and had entered the train with a ticket which held good only up to Winchester, a fact which he well knew would be made manifest at Vauxhall, where in 1901 all tickets were still collected. Some days before he had purchased the revolver, and he had been for some time meditating a crime.

As he sat eyeing the farmer he concluded, from his prosperous appearance, that he would probably have plenty of

money in his purse, and urged by need he determined to kill him and take whatever he might have—of course, the presence of a third party was a great nuisance; he would be obliged to kill her, too, in order to avoid detection. These express trains had a lavatory in each carriage, and Parker withdrew for a few minutes, as the train reached Surbiton, to make preparations for the murder, probably in order to load the revolver. He had postponed the deed as long as he could, and he knew that it must be done at once or not at all. Mrs. King was looking out of the window as he re-entered, and was more surprised than frightened when she heard the noise of a report, which she said seemed to her like a pop-gun; as she turned she heard another discharge and she felt something in her cheek. Seeing Parker with the revolver in his hand, she exclaimed: "My God! What have you done? Why ever did you do it?"

"I did it for money," was the reply. "I want some money. Have you got any?"

With the blood streaming down her face on to her hands and dress, she took out her purse, and in her excitement tendered him only a shilling, at the same time imploring him to save her life for the sake of her husband and children. Fearful of the blood dripping from her hands he refused the shilling and began rifling the body of Mr. Pearson whom he had killed with his first shot. Having opened the purse he offered Mrs. King a sovereign, probably in order to implicate her in the crime, and purchase her silence.

"Is that any use to you?" he inquired. She declined the gift, but promised to remain silent about the murder if only he would spare her life.

"What shall I do," said he, "with this b——y thing?" indicating the revolver. "How would it do to put it in the old bloke's hand so that people will think he killed himself?" But Mrs. King, no doubt thinking of her own safety, urged

him to throw it out of the window; the murderer flung it out just as the train was passing Nine Elms. As the train began to slow down as it neared Vauxhall, Parker opened the door and got his foot on the step. Directly the platform was reached he sprang out while the train was still in motion, rushed along the platform to the exit, thrust the ticket of which he had robbed Mr. Pearson into the astonished ticket collector's hand, and sprang down the steps leading to the street and safety.

Meanwhile, poor Mrs. King had sufficient strength and presence of mind to stagger on to the platform and call out: "Stop him; he's killed a man". It was too late to capture him on the platform, but several men were soon on his tracks, and as he took refuge by mistake in a coke retort he was soon obliged to surrender. Mrs. King, too, though terribly shaken by her awful experience, was well enough to give evidence at the trial. A defence of temporary insanity was set up, but he was found guilty of wilful murder and executed on 19th March. He confessed his crime; in fact, in face of the direct evidence he could not do otherwise, but he was so far from feeling any real contrition for his act that he expressed himself as sorry at not having killed Mrs. King and thereby having evaded capture. From his point of view, of course, her conduct seemed treacherous; but from the standpoint of the ordinary citizen she was to be congratulated on having done her duty.

In cases of that nature a person is absolved from keeping a promise extorted by menaces; we agree with Mr. Grewgious in "Edwin Drood", who held the view that: "If you could steal a march upon a brigand, or a wild beast, you had better do it".

THE MORPETH MURDER

At Jesmond, in a nice house situated in a pleasant locality, in the year 1910, dwelt John Alexander Dickman with his wife and two children. He was a turf commission agent, and

was living beyond his means, as the uncertain gains of an agent were just then insufficient to meet his expenses. In fact, he was desperately hard up and was looking anxiously for some means of replenishing his depleted exchequer. He saw one certain way of solving his financial difficulties—a way, unfortunately, that involved the death of one of his acquaintances named Nesbit, who acted as pay clerk to a Colliery Company. In pursuance of his duties, it was Nesbit's habit to carry a bag containing coin in gold, silver, and copper, to pay the miners at Widdington; the amount varied from £300 to £1,000. Nesbit made the journey from Newcastle to Widdington every Friday fortnight by the 10.27, which was a slow train, stopping at every station on its thirty-five mile run from Newcastle to Alnmouth.

On 4th March, shortly after Dickman had conceived the idea of the murder, he made a trial trip to observe Nesbit's habits, and to see where it would be best to kill him.

A fortnight later, on 18th March, he went to meet Nesbit at the station; all was in order since Nesbit had his bag, and he had a revolver—the two indispensable stage properties in the coming drama. Dickman booked for Stannington and Nesbit for Widdrington, and both walked along No. 5 platform towards the front of the train. Dickman no doubt looked anxiously up and down the platform to see if there was anybody to whom he would be known. It is, however, very difficult to make sure of such a thing on a crowded platform, and Dickman's subsequent conduct would have been very different had he realized that an artist named Hepple was watching him as he was conversing with the unsuspicious Nesbit, and hurrying him along to the carriage nearest the engine. The pay clerk usually travelled in the rear of the train, but he was easily persuaded to alter his habit by the stronger-willed Dickman.

The compartment next the engine had various advantages from Dickman's point of view. First, the proximity of the engine would drown the cries of the victim and the noise made by the shots; secondly, no passenger would be likely to disturb their harmonious *tête-à-tête*; and, lastly, the shade of the tunnel at Heaton Station would render recognition less likely by Mrs. Nesbit if she should come to chat with her husband. All this he doubtless calculated as he entered the compartment with the doomed pay clerk.

At Heaton, Nesbit put his head out of the window to attract the notice of his wife, who came up and chatted with him till the train started. She glanced casually at the other occupant, and saw a man sitting on the far side facing the engine with his coat collar turned up; and, as the shadow of the arch fell upon him, she got only an indistinct glimpse of his profile. Nesbit did not introduce Dickman to his wife, an act which would have of course saved his life; they merely chatted on ordinary topics. She did not for one moment dream that the unknown passenger would soon render her a widow, nor did either of them have any presentiment of impending doom.

The train moved slowly off and the two were again alone—Dickman's eyes were doubtless often on the bag, and his fingers often on his revolver; but he still postponed taking any action. Possibly Nesbit told him that he expected to meet some friends at Stannington. Here, at all events, two colliery clerks, Hall and Spink, who had been travelling in the next compartment came up and chatted with Nesbit; they, too, noticed a man sitting in the far corner. How Dickman must have cursed these interruptions caused by the popularity of his intended victim, bringing with them not only delay but rendering his chance of recognition more feasible. But his desperate need of money, and the sight of the bag which might contain as much as a £1,000 in gold, overbore all other considerations, sweeping

away not only conscience and pity, but even mere prudence and judgement. His brain was now obsessed by the one idea of getting the bag and killing Nesbit. He determined to do this in the next run of six minutes from Stannington to Morpeth.

True, his ticket held good only as far as Stannington, but he would pay the excess fare. It is not certain as to why Dickman had only booked to Stannington; perhaps he had intended to murder Nesbit sooner, or perhaps he wanted to explain his journey by saying that he had gone to visit a Mr. Hogg whom he knew at Stannington.

They were probably only just clear of Stannington when suddenly Dickman fired. His first shot was not fatal, for as poor Nesbit's hat and spectacles were found lying on the floor, there must have been a short and ineffectual struggle.

The murderer poured four more bullets into his victim and also probably battered his head with some blunt instrument and then stuffed the body under the seat. He seized the much coveted bag and concealed it under his great coat. It was all done, and it had all seemed so wonderfully simple. As soon as the train had reached Morpeth he had alighted, and carefully closed the door of the carriage. It was now for the first time he began to experience a feeling of cold fear.

Why was the train stopping so long? Supposing anybody were to enter the compartment he had just quitted and discover the body before the train left Morpeth? Would the ticket collector detect the bag beneath his coat? Was there anything curious in his manner or appearance to suggest that he had just committed a murder? Would his gait attract attention owing to the stone-and-a-half of coin that he found so heavy? No; away with such idle fancies. All was well. He rejected the offer of a free passage back to Stannington, paid the 2½d. excess fare and the train quietly steamed out of the station, bearing with it its guilty secret.

He made his way now on foot to an old disused pit shaft named the Isabella; the place was well known to him as he had previously worked there as a clerk. There was a grating over the mouth of the pit, but he could easily squeeze the bag through the bars. He was very disappointed to find so little gold, only three canvas bags marked Lambton No. 1. He threw away all the copper and reserved only the gold and silver.

As he must have thought it dangerous to retain so much money in his possession, it is probable that he concealed the greater part of his booty in two of the bags in a neighbouring wood, where it still remains, for it has never yet been found. The third bag, with some twenty pounds or so, he kept; and in doing so he made a great blunder, for its retention was pregnant with fatal consequences for him. This safely accomplished he hurried back to Morpeth Station in time to catch the 1.40 train for Newcastle. Meanwhile, the 10.27 had reached Alnmouth, where the body was discovered by a railway employee; whilst on the floor lay a soft hat and a pair of spectacles.

A reward was promptly offered for the apprehension of the assassin, and everybody in the Newcastle district was wondering as to who could have killed the inoffensive Nesbit in between Stannington and Widdrington. The disappearance of the bag made the motive clear; besides, Nesbit had no personal enemies.

Meanwhile, the murderer awaited the turn of events in his home at Jesmond. But surely, like all evil-doers, he must have been in a state of intolerable suspense, dreading that every knock at the door or ring of the bell might mean his arrest. If so, his fear was not groundless, for on Monday evening Nemesis appeared in the shape of a policeman, who invited his attendance at the police station. When there he freely admitted meeting Nesbit at the booking-office, and also that he had travelled by the 10.27 train; but he added quickly that

they had separated on the platform, Nesbit going to the front, whilst he himself had entered a carriage in the rear of the train.

When asked as to the purpose of his journey he stated that he was going to Stannington to keep a business appointment with a Mr. Hogg, but that, unfortunately, he had fallen asleep and gone on to Morpeth by mistake. He had then paid the excess fare, and had started to walk back to Stannington; but feeling unwell he had returned to Morpeth where he had missed the 1.12, and came back to Newcastle by the 1.40. On searching Dickman and also his house, the police found 15 sovereigns and a small canvas bag marked Lambton No. 1.

On 9th June, whilst Dickman was awaiting his final trial, the leather bag and the copper coins were discovered in the Isabella pit; and his statement concerning his appointment with Mr. Hogg was found to be false. At the trial on 4th July there is little doubt that his conviction was due to three damning pieces of evidence: the recognition by Hepple, the possession of the canvas bag, and the fainting of Mrs. Nesbit when she recognised the prisoner as her husband's companion. This latter event was rendered the more dramatic owing to the fact that the widow had failed to identify the prisoner as the other occupant of the compartment whilst she regarded his full face when giving her evidence; but at a later period of the trial she suddenly recognized in Dickman the profile of the mysterious passenger.

The prisoner's lawyer did his best to shake Hepple's evidence, but the latter was positive that he had seen Dickman walk with Nesbit to the front part of the train, that they had not re-passed, and that on looking out again they had both disappeared from the platform.

The jury were two and a half hours considering their verdict, and during all that time Dickman maintained an air of extraordinary firmness; the only thing that betrayed the

tense excitement under which he was really suffering was the swelling of the veins behind his ears. He was found guilty, and hanged on 10th August. To the last he refused to make any confession of his crime, and his last words were: "I will say nothing".

The most salient characteristic of the whole affair is Dickman's extraordinary optimism—a quality which he shared with most great criminals. For why should he have supposed that he would escape recognition in a busy platform at an hour like 10.27? How could he be sure that Mrs. Nesbit would fail to identify him at Heaton Station? What again about the two clerks at Stannington? Again, some casual passenger might enter the compartment containing the corpse and give the alarm before the train left Morpeth? Why, too, retain such damning evidence as the bank bag containing the gold? Like so many criminals Dickman had a profound belief in his own cunning, and in the stupidity and credulity of the general public. He seems to have thought that the police would swallow his lie about his appointment with Mr. Hogg, whereas, of course, such statements are always verified.

All this goes to prove that criminals carry their optimism to the verge of stupidity. They provide for certain eventualities, but at the same time overlook some glaring probabilities. As Dickens has pointed out, they shut 99 doors most carefully, only to leave the 100th door wide open. It is indeed fortunate that such is the case, for it is by this that such cruel scoundrels as John Alexander Dickman are detected. The reward of £100 promised by the colliery owners was awarded to Mr. Hepple, whose evidence was chiefly instrumental in securing the conviction.

The bogus confession lately sent to the editor of *Truth* by a man calling himself Condor, in which he accuses himself of the murder of Nesbit, makes it necessary to add a short consideration of the reasons which lead one to reject his

statement. He writes a long rigmarole full of useless and unimportant details, and his actual account of the crime is quite unconvincing; many of the details are improbable, and the story is too melodramatic to be real. The only point on which his story could be satisfactorily tested is where he avers that in the bag which he dropped down the Isabella air-shaft he placed a piece of cardboard inscribed in printed letters, "Dickman is innocent". Mr. Spooner, however, the colliery manager who found the bag on 9th June, never mentioned the existence of any such thing. Nor does Condor produce any corroborative evidence for his very belated statement. Whereas Dickman and Nesbit were seen together by Raven, Hepple, Hall, Spink, and Mrs. Nesbit (some recognizing one, and some the other), no one seems to have seen Condor; indeed, it is more than probable that he never travelled by the 10.27 at all on that fateful 18th March. Raven saw them outside Newcastle station, Hepple saw them walk to the front coach on No. 5 platform, Mrs. Nesbit saw them at Heaton station, and Hall and Spink saw them at Stannington; again, Dickman was seen by the ticket-collector at Morpeth, and paid an excess fare though he could have gone back almost at once gratis; his excuse for passing Stannington, to which he had booked, was exceedingly weak. Prior to the murder, too, Dickman was notoriously hard up and had been reduced to pawning several articles; and he could offer no satisfactory explanation for his possession of the bag marked Lambton No. 1, nor of the sovereigns which it contained. Bloodstains, moreover, were detected on his gloves and trousers pocket. No one need doubt that Dickman's punishment was just; but Condor's motives are more obscure. He may be influenced by mere vanity, by a desire to help Dickman's family, or by petty spite against the local police whom he severely censures in his so-called confession; for reasons which seem quite inadequate to a normal mind are often sufficient for a crank.

Condor expresses no sympathy for the unfortunate Nesbit or for his widow, nor does he express any sorrow for the murder, but reserves all his sympathy for Dickman; the whole account, though obviously written by a clever man thoroughly conversant with the details of the crime, may be dismissed as entirely false.

In order to elucidate the account of the murder, a list of the distances and timings from Newcastle to Alnmouth is given below:—

Distance			*Time*
—	..	Newcastle	10.27
½	..	Manor East	10.29
1½	..	Heaton	10.34
5	..	Forest Hall	10.41
6	..	Killingworth	10.45
7½	..	Annitsford	10.50
10	..	Cradlington	10.57
11½	..	Plessey	11. 2
14	..	Stannington	11. 8
16½	..	Morpeth	11.17
18½	..	Pegswood	11.21
20½	..	Longhirst	11.25
23½	..	Widdrington	11.32
25	..	Chevrington	11.39
28	..	Acklington	11.45
31	..	Warkworth	11.53
34	..	Alnmouth	11.59

CHAPTER VII

SEX MURDERERS

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SEX MURDERERS

SEX in all its varied manifestations is a fruitful source of crime, and comes second only to the desire for gain in this respect. Besides the more direct and obvious results of illicit passion, such as rape or murder, there are a multitude of offences which spring directly or indirectly from this cause; the blackmailing of wealthy offenders who fear a revelation to their wives, the performance of illegal operations by shady doctors at the request of unmarried girls, the ill treatment of illegitimate babies, the sale of unlawful drugs or of obscene photographs, the seduction of boys or girls by rascally schoolmasters, the dishonest toll levied on prostitutes by those who cater for their daily needs, the exorbitant rent charged by landlords for flats let for immoral purposes, and prostitution itself, are all children of the Parent Upas Tree of Lust.

Passion, itself, when united to Respect, Sympathy, and Affection is a potent force for Good, and serves to cement the bonds of matrimony; it is also, of course, necessary to the continuance of the Human Race. But when Passion is divorced from modifying and controlling influences, it rapidly degenerates into mere sensuality, and also frequently leads to crime. But though sex exercises a very potent influence on character and conduct, its power has been exaggerated by many writers, and most of all by Freud, who has rendered himself almost ridiculous in this respect.

His interpretation of dreams is especially absurd; for his use of symbolism as a method of explaining their meaning is

arbitrary and very far-fetched. It reminds me of the irreverent comment on Grimm's Law for illustrating the basic similarity of languages, which was to the effect that the consonants were interchangeable and the vowels didn't count.

Dreams may possibly often indicate our secret tendencies; and there is something to be said for the theory that in them we do those acts that we should like to do in our waking hours were it not for the restraining inhibitions of conscience and propriety. This may easily be true, but during sleep the unconscious mind, or, as it is sometimes termed, our subliminal self, is liberated from the control and supervision of our higher selves; instinct becomes for the time more powerful than intellect. Psycho-analysts of the present day have unfortunately fallen too much under the influence of Freud, and, consequently, are very apt to over-estimate the power of sex as a motive to action. They contend that very large numbers of people suffer from what they term a sex-complex. In a series of interviews, the psycho-analyst practitioner endeavours to make the patient understand the hidden portion of his mind; in fact, to fulfil the ancient maxim of "Know thyself". By making clear to the patient his particular complex, the psycho-analyst completes the first part of the treatment. In subsequent interviews he is aided to deal with this secret malady of the mind. Such treatment, especially in the delicate case of a sex complex, may be beneficial when the patient is in the hands of a wise and good practitioner—be he a priest in his confessional or a physician in his consulting room—but it must be fraught with obvious dangers, and might often do more harm than good in many cases.

But though many writers exaggerate the power of sex, so that in some cases it becomes a veritable obsession which mars their scientific judgement, it nevertheless remains true that as a motive to conduct it is only surpassed by the still stronger force of Self-Preservation.

Passion as an ingredient of love is a noble theme for romance; but when isolated as mere animal instinct, it is dangerous and pernicious, and, strangely enough, may often end in hate. Love is the greatest thing in the world, and therefore its perversion is the worst of all vices: *corruptio optimi est pessima*. Disordered passion becomes sometimes so debased, and so utterly alien to the so-called love under which cover it masquerades, that it frequently degenerates into downright cruelty.

The degraded beings who give way to this form of passion, delight in the infliction of pain, and, when thwarted in the gratification of their desires, are carried away into the commission of fearful crimes.

When the Parisian mob on 14th July, 1789, burst into the Bastille, they expected to find scores of lowly victims of monarchical tyranny; as a matter of fact they found only seven prisoners, and one of them was a nobleman. This was the notorious Marquis de Sade, who had been imprisoned at the request of his own relatives on account of his cruel and disgusting debaucheries. This mixture of lust and cruelty is therefore now termed Sadism—its correlation known as Masochism, which denotes the psychology of those who find a perverse pleasure in enduring slights and cruelties at the hands of their lovers, also exists, and is a factor well known to criminologists.

It is this factor in human psychology that explains the devotion of the Nancies of real life to their brutal paramours. Possibly, also, there is a hidden strain in many women of this nature, which makes them admire primitive or cave-men in films and plays. Certain novelists, too, undoubtedly, owe much of the popularity of their works to the fact that their heroes exhibit a certain roughness, and even cruelty, towards the heroine.

But the more usual form by which sex is exploited is by

needy adventurers, who, having a certain power of attracting the opposite sex, utilize it for purposes of financial gain. These persons are sometimes of the female sex, as in the case of that horrible female monster, Belle Gunness; but it is men who are more often guilty in this respect.

The adventurer soon discovers whether or not his victim possesses any money; if she has any, he soon gains possession of it under some pretext; in any case he usually soon deserts her either with her money or without. Occasionally, however, when the exploiter is a bold and cruel man he will add murder to seduction and robbery. Sometimes to gain insurance money, sometimes to escape from his victim's importunities or accusations, and occasionally from a mere lust for blood.

It is an amazing thing that so many women, and occasionally even women of culture and education, should be willing to respond to the advances of these scoundrels. Their credulity, too, seems boundless, and they greedily swallow the most improbable statements. They will, for instance, withdraw their hard-earned savings from the Post Office to give to a comparative stranger who boasts of being a millionaire, and yet is temporarily in need of £25! Probably, in most cases, their better judgement is obscured by the hypnotic power of sex fascination, which carries them along into hasty and foolish actions.

Landru and Smith are typical examples of this species of scoundrel. Henry Desiré Landru was guillotined on 25th February, 1922, for having murdered ten women and one boy at his villas at Vernouillet and Gambais. He procured his victims through the medium of advertisements in which he promised marriage to his victims. They were nearly all plain and ill-educated women of middle-age, likely to fall easy dupes to the fascination of what seemed to them an unexpected romance, sent providentially to end the drab monotony of their colourless lives.

For several years Landru pursued this evil method of livelihood without discovery, for he had the prudence to select those women only without near relatives or intimate friends. After his arrest the great difficulty of the prosecution lay in the fact that the police were quite unable to discover the remains of his victims. All the untiring efforts of the examining magistrates were unable to break down Landru's dogged denials, and at one time it was feared that he might escape punishment —but the vanishing of so many women, and the fact that they were never seen alive after visiting his villas, coupled with the fact that Landru profited by their disappearance, convinced the jury of his guilt; though to the last he maintained that the women had all left him alive, and only refrained from coming forward to spare themselves exposure and disgrace.

George Joseph Smith was as cruel and callous as Landru; but either his caution or his good fortune were inferior; for he was arrested after his third murder. He generally made the acquaintance of women at the seaside, and his subsequent *modus operandi* was to drown his bride in a bath. When no his honeymoon he was always very careful to see that there was a bath at the lodgings, and he also satisfied himself by actual inspection that it was suitable to his purpose as to size and depth.

Having installed himself with his bride in their new rooms, he used to pretend that his affection as a loving husband made him solicitous concerning her health; and on the next day he used to propose a visit to a doctor. The bride, touched by this loving care, tried to imagine herself a little poorly, and together the loving pair used to visit some neighbouring doctor. Smith did all the talking at the interview that followed, explaining that his wife had had a slight fit that had quite alarmed him, and that he had brought her round for treatment.

At this point one is forced to stop to remark on the extraordinary fact that the wife never denied his amazing falsehood—

a proof of the strange hypnotic power that the man possessed.

After receiving some advice and some medicine, the newly married couple used to return to their lodgings. The bride was persuaded to take a bath while Smith played the harmonium down below in the parlour. After a while he would go upstairs, enter the bathroom, and in some way succeed in drowning the bride; the exact method that he employed is still a matter of controversy.

Having accomplished his task he would creep downstairs and resume his playing, call to the landlady that he must go out to purchase some tomatoes, return, and ask whether his wife had come downstairs during his absence, affect a hypocritical surprise at her delay, and rush upstairs to see what was the matter.

He would then summon the landlady, and run out to fetch the same doctor that he had, previously, artfully prepared to receive the news. The medical man would find the poor woman dead, in the bath, clasping the soap tightly in her hand. He would give a certificate purporting to show that she had died from a fit due to heart failure or apoplexy, and all would be well—for Smith. He would bury her with the rigid economy of a pauper's funeral, draw any insurance or other money that might accrue to him, and rejoin the mistress that he honoured with his attentions when he was not away engaged on "business".

His conduct during the trial, when he often stopped proceedings by his unseemly brawling and shouts, was brazen and impudent, and few can have pitied him when he paid the fitting penalty of his cold-blooded crimes on 1st July, 1915.

The series of outrages known as the Jack the Ripper murders, that so shocked and terrified London in 1888, were never clearly traced to their author, and must remain among the unsolved mysteries of crime. They were evidently the work of some

homicidal maniac, who was possessed with Sadistic fury against a certain class of women. The police had narrowed their suspicions to three persons: the first a Polish Jew who lived in Whitechapel and was said to resemble the man seen by the constable in Mitre Court on the night of the murder in that locality. He was shortly afterwards placed in an asylum.

The second was a Russian doctor of bad antecedents, who was known to carry surgical instruments about with him.

The third was also a doctor, whose mind hovered on the borderland that separates sanity from madness, and who disappeared after the last murder of that series, which took place in Miller's Court on 9th November, 1888. On 31st December, 1888, his body was found in the Thames, and it seemed likely, from the appearance of the corpse, that he must have committed suicide some time in November.

The murders were probably the work of a doctor or medical student, because the amputations were performed with considerable skill and accuracy.

A similar series of outrages occurred in Paris in the "sixties" and were traced to an ordinary artisan, who confessed that his degenerate nature, and horrible Sadistic craving for blood, would have led him to continue his atrocities, had he not fortunately been caught *flagrante delicto*.

The failure of our police to catch Jack the Ripper was in no way attributable to any inefficient methods, but to the severe limitations with which our English love of liberty makes us clog their activities. Had they enjoyed the freedom of their Paris confrères, there is little doubt that Jack the Ripper would have been caught.

Still, in spite of these drawbacks, our English Justice is superior to that of either France or America, where a much larger percentage of murderers escape scot free, and life and property are less secure.

THE BOURNEMOUTH MYSTERY

Miss Irene May Wilkins like so many of the great middle class, lived in Streatham; a pretty, graceful girl, she possessed more than the usual amount of industry, perseverance, and self-respect. At this period (December, 1921) she was on the look out for remunerative employment, and she had therefore advertised in the *Morning Post*, as follows:

> Lady cook, 31, requires post in school. Experience in school with 40 boarders. Salary £65. Disengaged. Miss I. Wilkins, 21 Thirlmere Road, Streatham, London, S.W.

On the morning of 22nd December, Miss Wilkins received the following telegram:—

> *Morning Post*. Come immediately 4.30 train Waterloo Bournemouth Central. Car will meet train. Expense no object. Wood, Beech House.

Thinking that she had probably met with an answer to her wishes, Miss Wilkins, after consultation with her family, which consisted of a mother, a brother, and a sister, hurriedly packed her attaché case with a few toilet requisites, and reached Waterloo in time to catch the express to Bournemouth. She had telegraphed in reply to announce her departure for Bournemouth, but as only a bogus address had been given her telegram was sent back to Thirlmere Road; but unfortunately Miss Wilkins had by that time already started.

That such a pure and innocent girl should have been allowed to fall a victim to the cruel brutality of such a scoundrel as Allaway is one of those mysteries that cannot be solved by the most eloquent preacher or the most learned theologian.

Why is the pigeon devoured by the hawk? Why is the lamb destroyed by the wolf? Why do the innocent suffer for the guilty? Some have been so perplexed by the whole problem of pain and evil that they doubt the omnipotence of God, and become Dualists; others, like Mrs. Eddy, deny the very existence of pain and evil, and treat them as delusions; others find their solution in the Cross of Christ—to all, however, it must remain in some of its aspects an insoluble mystery.

Now, as the express bore Miss Wilkins, all unconscious of her terrible danger, nearer to Bournemouth, a very different kind of person was preparing to meet her.

Thomas Henry Allaway, to judge by his spelling, must have made an indifferent scholar at the Board School which enjoyed the honour of his education.

After leaving school he became a tinsmith, and made an early marriage. He managed, during this period of his life, to save enough money to pay for lessons in motor-driving, and in the management of a car. He obtained a situation as a chauffeur in 1914, but on the outbreak of the war he enlisted in the Army Service Corps, as a motor-driver. He remained in the Army throughout the war and was not demobilized till 1919.

Then followed a period of difficulty and hardship; for, like so many ex-service men, Allaway found it very difficult to secure employment. Women were filling many of the places which men had formerly occupied; and the labour market was seriously dislocated.

At last, fortune smiled upon him when, early in 1920, he was engaged by Mr. Warwick Sutton as chauffeur at Bournemouth. His duties were light; he generally commenced his actual driving at 10.30 and left off at 6 p.m.—enjoying two hours for his dinner from 1 till 3. Like so many men, Allaway had not been improved by his experiences during the war.

There were many foolish optimists who believed that the war would improve the world generally, and England in particular. As if war could possibly improve people! Money changed hands quickly, and generally in the wrong direction. The cultured, honourable leisured classes and the professional class were heavily taxed, and the money was paid over to a greedy vulgar crowd of war profiteers In addition to the ordinary taxes, there was a hidden levy in the shape of currency inflation which has nearly doubled the price of commodities.

The tax-payers' money was thrown about in all directions —bonuses, gratuities, increased posts, increase of salaries, and wages. The returned soldiers, in spite of many perils and hardships, had, at any rate, escaped for a time from the monotony of daily drudgery, and the fear of losing their jobs. They had been well fed, and on their return they spent their gratuities in foolish pleasures. Employment was often difficult to obtain, and work seemed dull and uneventful after a life of danger and adventure. Men who had been termed heroes did not take kindly to once again becoming bus conductors.

An epidemic of crime followed the period of demobilization. Allaway now commenced to go rapidly downhill, from a moral point of view. He began, first, to indulge in a little betting, but not for considerable amounts. He also spent an hour or two in the evening at the Conservative Working Men's Club, or at the Salisbury Hotel.

These were, however, comparatively harmless pleasures, but what was much worse was that he began secretly to use his employer's car to give joy rides to various women and girls of his acquaintance. This began his moral ruin; for he got a taste for women.

Apparently, too, the kind of girl that would respond to his advances in Bournemouth did not suffice him; his constant association in the course of his duties as chauffeur with fashionable and elegant ladies, caused him to conceive a desire for getting

hold of some refined nurse or lady-companion. With this purpose in view he commenced in December his artful system of decoy telegrams. On 17th December, he dispatched from the Boscombe Post Office (close to where he lived) a telegram, worded as follows:

13.39
Kingsland Road,
West Hampstead.

Re your advertisement. Immediate interview desired. Come 4.30 train Waterloo to Bournemouth Central. Remain night if desired. Expenses given—Car will meet train. Mrs. Cooper.

He handed this in during his lunch hour at 1.35. The lady clerk, Miss Diplock, who received it was able to identify him later. His next telegram was sent on 20th December from the Bournemouth Post Office at 2.50 p.m., to:

Cavendish Bureau,
12, Princes Street,
London, W.1.

Please send nurse by 5.30 Waterloo to Boscombe young and pleasant nurse—companion for girl twenty. Car will meet train about ten. Urgent, Butler, Boscombe Grange.

It is to be remarked that on this occasion Allaway spelt "pleasant" as "plesent"—a mistake which he failed to eradicate even after his arrest. A Miss Walters received this telegram and being (strangely enough) in doubt as to whether one of the words was "car" or "ear", she asked Allaway this somewhat unnecessary question. After his arrest she identified him even more by the tone of his voice than by his appearance.

In the first case, a lady came; but as a bogus address had been given she was obliged to return after a fruitless journey. On that occasion, fortunately for her, Allaway was unable to keep his appointment. On the next occasion a very pretty Norwegian girl was providentially deterred from coming, owing to some prudent advice.

But on 22nd December, still intent on his wicked purpose, Allaway went to a shop kept by a Mr. Samways, and purchased a *Morning Post*. Scanning the columns of the paper hastily outside the shop, the chauffuer soon caught sight of Miss Wilkins's ill-starred advertisement, and noticing that she was only 31 and described as a lady, he at once decided to send her a telegram to meet him that very evening. Before he left, however, he was seen by a licenced victualler named Da Costa, who imagined that he was looking for a winner, and who (having been allowed, as he termed it, a second shot) identified him at a subsequent date.

Allaway meanwhile went off directly to the Boscombe Post Office, where at 10.15 he sent off the telegram to Miss Wilkins. In the original there were no less than three mistakes in spelling: the "e" was omitted in "Bournemouth" and "immediately", and "expense" was spelt with a "c".

On this occasion no unexpected incident occurred to interfere with his wicked plans, and at about 6.30 on 22nd December, Allaway, with the big grey Mercèdes car, was eagerly awaiting the arrival of his prey.

On the previous day he had inquired from a signalman named Nash as to the proper place to await the arrival of the seven o'clock express from London; and he now found himself in the yard with three or four other cars. He naturally did not court observation, and he took up his position in a modest and unobtrusive way with his lights turned out.

By one of those small occurrences that constitute the irony of life, some papers were blown away from a neighbouring truck

just after the arrival of the express, and Allaway instinctively put out his foot to stop them.

Now, among the passengers were Miss Wilkins and a certain Mr. Humphries. The latter was a very keen observer, whether of ladies or motor-cars, and he noticed the slight elegant girl as she stepped out on to the platform in her fawn coat, and her *suède* hat attractively trimmed with scarlet; he noticed, too, that she was carrying an umbrella and an attaché case.

As he passed out of the station the girl followed him with the other Bournemouth passengers, and Mr. Humphries went outside the station to look for his own automobile. Just at that moment, in fact at about 7.5, he saw some papers fluttering by him and went forward to stop them. As he did so he was brought right up against a man skulking in the shadow of a grey Mercèdes car; this man he subsequently identified as Allaway. The car interested him, as a car designer, and he observed its new luggage-carrier, and the position of the head-lights and side-lights.

As he walked further forward still searching for his own car, the grey Mercèdes car swept by him, and he recognized the chauffeur he had seen in the yard and the attractive girl he had observed on the platform with the scarlet trimming in the fawn hat. The great motor swung by him at about 30 miles an hour, and vanished into the darkness, bearing in it Allaway and the girl.

After that fleeting glimpse of the motor designer's, no mortal eye save that of her assassin ever again saw Miss Irene Wilkins alive. But Allaway knew well the spot to which he was driving; it was a deserted field some $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Bournemouth Central Station on the Iford Road. He knew it well; because he had often reconnoitred the country round, and had deliberately chosen this exact spot as specially suited to his purpose. It was well removed from any houses, and no screams of a terrified girl would be likely at this deserted spot to attract attention.

At the rate at which the car was travelling it must have reached this place in about 12 minutes, i.e., at about 7.20. Did any uneasy feeling, any vague suspicion, fill the breast of the poor girl, as she saw that they were leaving behind them all the lighted parts of Bournemouth? Or did he lull these doubts to rest by some of his usual glib lies? We shall never know. Probably when he stopped the car he offered some pretext about something wrong with the engine. Then in order to allow the driver to alight Miss Wilkins must have stepped out first.

Allaway had kept his designs to himself during this twelve minutes' drive, and it was only when they were both standing on the gravel by the side of the car that he made his vile suggestion. Miss Wilkins repudiated the idea with scorn, and asked to be at once driven to her employer's house. The scoundrel must then have caught hold of her; but she, being an active, well-developed young woman, defended herself as well as she could with her umbrella.

Enraged at finding his advances refused he snatched the umbrella from her hand, and hurled it into the bushes; and like the foul coward he was he then struck her several blows on the face with his clenched fists.

But the girl still struggled bravely to defend her honour, and Allaway's brute nature being now fully aroused, he struck her on the head with his spanner, as she struggled with him by the bank at the edge of the field; she fell down into the gorse by the sides of the road, as was made evident by the scratches that covered her delicate hands, and as she lay helpless he shattered her skull with heavy blows from the spanner. He now dragged the dead, or dying, girl into the field, forcing her body through the barbed wire fencing and tearing her stockings in doing so.

Seeing that his victim was now dead, or dying, or frightened by some noise, the chauffeur now desisted from his foul attempt.

His cruel and libidinous desires now gave place to something still more imperious, the desire for self-preservation.

His leading idea now was to escape detection. He must put back the car as quickly and as noiselessly as possible into the garage, and then show himself in his usual haunts—the Working Men's Club or the Salisbury Hotel. He was so far successful, in that he would seem to have reached the hotel at about 8.30 p.m. He now conversed with his wife and several friends, with the idea of establishing an alibi.

Early next morning at 7.30, an old age pensioner named Nicklen, who was coming from Tuckton, noticed some cattle sniffing at something. He entered the field and discovered Miss Wilkins's body; she was lying on her back in the corner of the field, partially concealed by some bushes; her clothes were drawn up over her knees, exposing her underclothes.

With great forethought he did his best to prevent any interference with the ground; so that when the police arrived they found the tell-tale marks of the Dunlop Magnum tyres, which afterwards went a long way towards hanging Allaway—for these tyres were of a special type that was at that time not at all common.

Dr. Simmons, the police surgeon, described the injuries on the head and face; the bruises, he said, were caused by a clenched fist, and the more serious wounds on the head by some blunt instrument.

The news was all over Bournemouth on the 23rd, and a few hours later it was all over England. Public interest was soon at fever point, and there was a general hope that the cowardly assassin would soon be arrested. But for four and a half months the Bournemouth mystery was to baffle the public.

All sorts of absurd clues were given to the police, and among others an absurd theory was rife that the murder had been committed by a Welsh Jew—others confidently asserted that it

was the work of some wealthy seducer and that the mistakes in spelling were all feigned.

The only real clues that the police now possessed were the marks left near the scene of the murder, which had been identified on 23rd December by Mr. W. W. Graham of the Hants and Dorset Motor Services, as being caused by the small studs of a Dunlop Magnum tyre of 820 millimetres, and of being due to a car weighing about 30 cwt. They had, too, the original slips on which the three decoy telegrams were written; and, still more important, they had the evidence of Mr. Humphries, who had seen Miss Wilkins and recognized her hat, and gave to the police a description of the car and of the chauffeur. This description was given to the police on 26th December.

The day after the murder (23rd December) Allaway determined to make away with the attaché case which he still had in his possession; for Miss Wilkins, when she alighted, had naturally left it in the car.

That afternoon, Mrs. Sutton, who lived at Barton Close, Clifton Road, Southborne, went in the car to visit her sister who lived near Branksome. Whilst Mrs. Sutton was visiting her sister, Allaway turned the car on to a piece of waste ground, and threw away the attaché case; and in that act he no doubt considered that now he had nearly freed himself from all compromising evidence.

There was, however, he reflected, one other fatal clue, which had been mentioned in the papers—the tyre marks. So early on 24th December Allaway commenced to change them; but whilst doing so he was accosted by Walter Randall, a tea salesman, who also kept his car at the Portland-Mews; he noticed Allaway was changing a tyre on one of the back wheels.

A day or two later a certain Harry Blanchard, an electrician, was engaged in executing some work at Barton Close, when the conversation naturally turned on the murder. The honest workman expressed a hope that the police might soon discover the

murderer. To this Allaway replied: "I don't think they will, they will never find him."

Blanchard resumed: "They have several good clues, one being the make of the tyres."

"That is nothing to go by," said Allaway.

The cook then inquired what kind of tyre was on the Suttons' car. "Why, as a matter of fact, mine are Dunlop Magnums all round."

Allaway must have felt that the conversation had become somewhat unpleasant; and Blanchard now further increased his anxiety by informing him that the police were stopping all cars on the roads in Bournemouth for the purpose of inspecting. "Well, they won't stop mine," he replied, "as I'm going sick."

Blanchard left the house with a vague feeling of suspicion; because it was evident to him that Allaway had been out in the car on the evening of the 22nd and that he had not uttered one word of sorrow for the poor murdered girl.

For the next three days Allaway put himself on the sick list, and so for a time avoided the search that was being actively persecuted. On 2nd January, the missing attaché case was discovered lying in some bushes near the house where Mrs. Sutton's sister resided. It gave signs of having been there for some days.

On 4th January, Mr. Humphries was at the Bournemouth Central Station to catch the 8.40 a.m. train for Waterloo. He recognized the Mercèdes car that he had seen in the yard on the evening of the murder, and asked his son to get the number. Mr. Humphries, Junior, reported to his father that the number was LK 7405. On 6th January, Mr. Humphries informed the police that the car which he had seen in the yard on 22nd December was LK 7405. On 7th January, Detective-Sergeant Ellis interviewed Allaway and carefully inspected the Mercèdes car. Allaway was asked to give an account of his movements on 22nd December, and also as to whether he had changed the tyres of his car.

He said that he had gone to the pictures and then to the Conservative Working Men's Club; and that they had returned home at about eight and then visited the Salisbury Hotel.

He was also invited to write out the decoy telegrams, when he made the same blunders in spelling as when he indited them at the various post offices.

Mrs. Sutton stated that he was free after 5.30 on the day of the murder, and also informed the police that she had an invalid son living at "Beech Hurst", Beech Wood Avenue. Allaway, who had little imagination, had evidently borrowed one of his fictitious addresses from the residence of this son.

It is a matter open to debate as to whether the police would not have done wisely at this juncture to have arrested Allaway. They had a very strong case against him already; and his arrest would have been followed by his identification by the post office clerks as the sender of the decoy telegrams. Of course, the police could not be sure of this latter fact; but they might even before his arrest have arranged for the girls to see the chauffeur. But so often cases in which the police have been practically certain that they have caught the actual offender have broken down in Court, owing to some clever defence or some weak link in the chain of circumstantial evidence, which had induced the jury to give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt. Such being the case, the Bournemouth police authorities held their hand and still allowed Allaway his freedom.

From 7th January, however, he was kept under close observation and a correspondence was opened up with him in the hope that his handwriting would betray him. Allaway, however, proved too crafty to nibble at this bait; for from 22nd December he changed his writing from his former sloping characters to an upright style, which he maintained even whilst writing notes to his Counsel during his various trials.

With reference to his non-arrest, it must be remembered

that the police do not merely require evidence that will convince a Dr. Watson, who is listening to a Sherlock Holmes, but they need a case so overwhelming in its nature as to cause a jury to bring in a verdict that will lead to a sentence of death. Therefore, during those first months of 1922, the police played a waiting game, like a keen chess player waiting for a false move on the part of his opponent.

In April, Allaway made a false move by visiting one of the post offices from which he had sent a decoy telegram. He had a parcel with him, and he asked for a stamp. He was supplied with one, and then he inquired as to whether he should stick it on himself. His tone of voice attracted the notice of one of the lady clerks, and she at once said to her companion: "That is the man who handed in the decoy telegrams: I am sure of it." He was followed and identified, and his name was given to the police. But even now he was not arrested; though it would seem that there was no longer any adequate reason for delay.

But soon after this, Allaway made a second false move by stealing his master's cheque-book, and running away to Reading. He found and cashed cheques to the value of £96, and in his forged signatures he lapsed into his ordinary writing, and usual bad spelling; for his master's Christian name appeared as "Arther".

The police, who had never lost sight of him, promptly arrested him on the charge of uttering forged cheques; and on 6th May he was formally charged with murder. After his arrest the police searched his house and discovered several letters and post cards that he had written during the war in his ordinary writing that corresponded with that of the famous decoy telegrams, and, furthermore, they found a key which opened an American lock which secured the garage. This latter circumstance explained how it was that Allaway could take the car in and out whenever he wished.

The attention of practically every newspaper reader was now fixed upon the three trials which followed each other at Bournemouth, Winchester, and London.

The first, before 14 magistrates including three ladies, was, of course, the longest; it lasted for no less than a month, and involved ten appearances of the prisoner. The court was packed, and even the passages and corridors were full of people eager to catch a glimpse of the prisoner. He was a fresh-coloured man, who looked younger than his thirty-six years; his black hair was carefully brushed, and he looked calm and unconcerned in his Norfolk jacket and grey tweed suit.

On the second day of the trial admission was by ticket only. Mr. Pearce appeared for the Crown, and Mr. Lawman for the defence. Among the exhibits were the hat with the scarlet trimming, which had been found in the bushes, the umbrella that was leaning by the fence, and the attaché case that had been found some days afterwards in another part of Bournemouth. The prosecution showed that the three decoy telegrams had been dispatched at just such times as the prisoner would be free, that their writing coincided with that of the prisoner, and that he had been identified by two lady clerks as the man who sent them.

He showed that Allaway had bought copies of the *Morning Post* during the latter part of December (the paper in which the advertisements appeared) and that he had been identified by Mr. Samways, a newspaper vendor, and another person, as purchasing a copy of that paper early on 22nd December. He showed how both the prisoner and his car had been recognized just before the murder, by Mr. Humphries, who had seen a lady wearing a *suède* hat trimmed with scarlet drive away with Allaway from the station yard at about 7.10. He stated that this car had Dunlop Magnum tyres which would have left the marks that were observed at the spot where the murder took place, and he proved that the marks left by the small studs of this

tyre were distinct from those that would result from a Michelin.

Each piece of evidence taken separately was suspicious; but taken together the effect was overwhelming. Both lawyers and theologians understand the weight of cumulative evidence; but it is not always equally obvious to the untrained mind of an ordinary person.

The defence relied chiefly on an attempt to prove an alibi, and to throw doubt on the accuracy of the evidence as to identification. The evidence of the two Barretts, who owned the Portland-Mews Garage, was greatly weakened by the fact that Allaway could enter the garage with his own key.

It was during this part of the trial that a sharp passage of arms occurred between the Mayor and the defending Counsel. The former complained that the Bench could not properly understand this part of the evidence without a plan of the garage and mews—to which Mr. Lawman replied: "I am sorry; but you have the unlimited wealth of the State behind you, and we have nothing!"

This kind of innuendo is sometimes employed by the defence in order to arouse sympathy for the prisoner, and to throw odium upon the prosecution. It is an appeal to false sentiment, and the kind of melodramatic clap-trap that makes an almost irresistible appeal to the emotional and the ignorant.

It was just this kind of device that Kinealy employed in defending the Claimant, and which procured that impostor such a lot of misplaced sympathy.

The Mayor promptly recalled Mr. Lawman to his proper duties as an advocate, and to the proper respect due to the Bench.

Mrs. Allaway's evidence did little to strengthen the defence. She stated that she and her husband had been living at Boscombe since October, 1921.

On 22nd December her husband had come home to tea at six o'clock, and that after tea she had left him at the corner

of the Working Men's Club and gone to the pictures. At about nine o'clock she rejoined her husband at the Salisbury Hotel, where she found him in the private bar talking to a friend. On Boxing Day her husband had complained of feeling ill, and had stayed away from work; he had kept away for three days. On Sunday she and her husband and their little girl visited the scene of the murder. She admitted that Miss Sutton had visited her at Reading on the day after her husband's arrest; but she denied having said that she did not know where he was between six and nine on the night of the murder. She admitted that two letters that were shown to her were in his writing; but she was not sure about the third.

She was then shown the decoy telegrams and asked whether they were not similar in style to letters written by her husband.

She admitted that some of the separate letters were the same; but she denied that as a whole she would have taken them as having been written by her husband.

She got very confused as to Allaway's attire on the 22nd, and finally averred that he was wearing a brown overcoat that she had bought for him out of the proceeds of the pawning of her sewing machine. She could not account for his movements between the all important hours of seven and eight.

Arthur Barrett gave evidence that he had met Allaway at the Salisbury Hotel at about eight, which if it had been true would have been most valuable for the defence. He also stated that the tyres of Allaway's car were so much worn that he did not think they could leave any impression on the ground. But his evidence was weakened in effect by the fact of his intimacy with the Allaways, and the unsatisfactory way in which he gave his evidence.

All the evidence for the defence purported to show that Allaway had been the victim of a curious case of mistaken identity, as in the famous Beck case; but the Bench were of opinion

that a prima facie case had been established, and they committed Allaway for trial at the Winchester Assizes.

Wessex is the heart of England. Here Alfred made his struggle against the Danes; here Cedric became first King of England; here those old sea-worthies lived who made us lords of the sea. Here Shakespeare and Herrick sang; and here still Hardy, the last of the great Victorians, writes his wondrous tales of love and suffering.

And the town of Winchester is worthy of being the capital of Wessex. No more picturesque Assize Court exists in Great Britain than this at Winchester. One passes through the great hall of the ancient castle to reach the Court, and your passage is lined by two rows of policemen armed with the old-fashioned javelins.

The Court itself is a fine lofty chamber adorned with painted woodwork, surrounded by a spacious gallery, capable of accommodating some 250 people.

A fanfare of trumpets announced the arrival of Mr. Justice Avory, who, in his scarlet and ermine robes, was preceded by the Chaplain, and the High Sheriff in his military uniform with its scarlet tunic. The prisoner was then ushered into the dock; he was wearing a sports coat and dark trousers, and seemed quite calm and unconcerned. Mr. Inskip, K.C., conducted the prosecution and the defence had been entrusted to Mr. Fox-Davies.

The same evidence was produced as at the trial at Bournemouth; but the most exciting was that given by Mr. Humphries. He was quite positive about his having seen Allaway at the station on 22nd December, and as to recognizing the car again on 4th January. In his endeavour to shake this witness, Mr. Fox-Davies had to be informed by the Judge that he was trying the patience of the court.

Another very interesting witness was Mr. Guerrin, the hand-writing expert, who pointed out the many similarities

between the decoy telegrams, and the pre-murder script of Allaway. So glaring was the similarity to the telegrams in one letter, that Allaway in his evidence denied that this particular letter known as exhibit No. 43 had been written by him. It was addressed to Mrs. Allaway and began as follows: "My dearest May", and ended: "your ever-loving husband Tom". Then followed several crosses to indicate kisses. He stated that this letter had been written by a comrade.

Though he responded to his own lawyer's questions glibly enough, he was very nervous when he was being cross-examined by Mr. Inskip. Some letters he denied, others he admitted, of others he said he was not sure as to whether or no they were in his writing.

As to his movements on 22nd December, he was quite unable to reconcile his statements at Winchester with those he had made at Bournemouth, and he kept saying: "I never looked at the clock that night".

Like all stupid liars he foundered more and more in a veritable morass of contradictions and equivocations. He gave his evidence, too, in a very husky and indistinct voice, so that he often had to be asked to speak more loudly. In fact, he presented a very pitiable spectacle in the witness-box, and did much harm to his case. For he was not like the Claimant, a man who could remember his former lies, nor make his statements dovetail with each other. His statements, too, were at variance with those made by other witnesses for the defence.

Mr. Fox-Davies followed the same line of defence as Mr. Lawman, by endeavouring to establish an alibi. But the poor figure cut by the prisoner under cross-examination, and the damning evidence of the special tyres, the hand-writing, and the identifications by Humphries, Diplock, and Walters, were too great a weight to carry, and he must soon have realized that the result was a foregone conclusion. The Judge gave the jury six questions, to assist them in their deliberations:

1. Were the three decoy telegrams all sent by the same person?

2. Were they all sent to lure young persons to Bournemouth for an unlawful purpose?

3. Was the person who sent the telegram on 22nd December at the station to meet the 4.40 train (from Waterloo)?

4. Was the person who met the train the person who committed the murder?

5. Did that same person throw away the attaché case at Branksome Park?

6. Is there any doubt that the car which took the deceased to the scene of the murder had Dunlop Magnum tyres?

Dealing with motive, the Judge found that the young lady had met her death in the course of an attempt to ravish her—an attempt frustrated by the heroic resistance of a well-developed young woman, and of a young woman who was undoubtedly virtuous and pure. She had been struck with fists in the face, knocked down, and then battered on the head with some heavy instrument; and there were certain indications that her cowardly murderer had endeavoured to complete his offence whilst she was actually dying in the field.

"You will bear in mind the effect of your verdict upon the prisoner, and you will also bear in mind its effect on every young woman who may be lured to destruction by wicked and lustful men. I ask you, holding the balance evenly between your duty to the public on the one hand, and your duty to the prisoner on the other, to consider your verdict".

Meanwhile, in the hall known as King Arthur's Chapel, poor Mrs. Allaway was in a state of complete collapse, whilst the prisoner's mother was kneeling in prayer for her son. In a separate room the jury debated the issues of life and death. In the court a medley of people discussed the probabilities of an acquittal or of condemnation. In the gallery several ladies

were knitting with great assiduity. Everyone was in a state of tension.

After an absence of nearly one hour the jury announced their readiness, and the Chaplain and High Sheriff once more ushered in the Judge; and Allaway came up the steps from his cell into the dock. At last the foreman gave out the fateful verdict "Guilty"; the Judge donned the black cap, and sentence of death was passed upon the prisoner.

One more effort, however, was made to save Allaway, and his case was heard by the Appeal Court in London early in August. The appeal was heard by the Lord Chief Justice assisted by two other judges, and the case did not take long to decide. Mr. Fox-Davies, who again appeared for the prisoner, argued that the circumstances of the case pointed to some wealthy seducer. He also called a new witness. But after hearing her evidence the Court was of opinion that she was too emotional to make a reliable witness, and that had she been able to appear at the Assizes, the verdict of the jury would have been the same. The circumstantial evidence, especially as regards the writing, was not merely strong, it was overwhelming. The appeal was therefore dismissed.

Allaway, who had stood stolidly listening to the Lord Chief Justice deciding his fate, was led away by the warders, and was taken back to Winchester gaol to await his execution on the following Thursday. He denied his guilt till just before his death, when he admitted the justice of the sentence. He was hanged on 11 August.

Thomas Henry Allaway owed probably much of his moral deterioration to the war, and the pestiferous atmosphere that the war created. The Church of England chose to gain a little temporary popularity by putting patriotism in front of the Sermon on the Mount, and some of her high ecclesiastics degraded themselves by becoming mere recruiting sergeants. The Press became the dissemination of falsehoods in every country; all

truth and honour had to be subordinated to the winning of the war.

After the Armistice, enthusiasm died away, and hard materialism became dominant in Europe. People's nerves were disordered, and they suffered from a sort of universal shell-shock. The educated became indifferent, the vulgar masses became lawless; and the collapse of the currency in Europe provoked to speculation and fraud. The thirst for pleasure and the distaste to regular work, spread like a foul miasma over Europe, and numbers of men deliberately turned to crime. It will probably take another six or seven years before the world will recover its model and economic equilibrium.

We may be thankful that here, in England, things are tending to right themselves more quickly than elsewhere. But it is strange that no really great statesman or great prophet or preacher has arisen to lead the world into the Way of Peace. The Hour has come; but not the Man.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WOMAN MURDERER

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THE comparison of the relative talents and shortcomings of the two sexes is a well-worn theme for school debating societies, and for the columns of a daily newspaper. Often, too, it forms a favourite topic of conversation in the club, or in the drawing-room. Yet, in spite of its perennial discussion, it is extremely doubtful if any firm conclusions are ever reached. How far, for instance, are the ordinary assumptions in this subject in any way reliable? Are women really more curious than men? Are men less talkative than women? Can one even assert definitely that men are more brave, or that women are more moral?

We are on surer ground in stating that man is, as a rule, taller, heavier, and stronger than woman. He can run faster, lift heavier weights, and endure greater fatigue. The male brain, too, is heavier than that of the woman. These well-known physiological differences must have a psychological reaction. And so we find that man is katabolic and inclined to destruction, whereas woman is primarily anabolic or conservative. Man's propensity to destruction is manifest in his addiction to sport, and is well illustrated in the French bon mot concerning the Englishman, who is represented as saying: "It's a fine day; let us go out and kill something".

This katabolic tendency renders man prone to action, and to the exhibition of sudden bursts of energy. Therefore, in the sphere of crime he is apt to commit deeds of violence and destruction.

Woman, on the contrary, being anabolic is more patient, and is averse to war or violence of any kind. Whenever women have developed into cruel *tricoteuses* as in 1793, or *petroleuses* as in 1871, or into vindictive commissars as in Bolshevik Russia, or into destructive Sinn Feiners as in Ireland, it is entirely alien to their feminine instincts, and is the product of an unwholesome mixture of ignorant idealism and blind vindictiveness working on a substructure of neurotic hysteria.

In intellectual matters man is more objective, and therefore more capable of taking an interest in things external to himself; whereas woman is apt to regard everything from a subjective or purely personal point of view.

This subjectivity is prejudiced to creative work in Art. In the domain of Art one is astonished at the sterility of woman's genius. Many are talented performers and even clever composers of music, but of real genius there is an entire absence.

The great names of Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, Wagner, Grieg, Gounod, Verdi, and Rossini, stand far removed from the best efforts of feminine competition. "They have not," writes Schopenhauer, "one single great painting to show, because they are lacking in all objectivity of mind, which is just what painting chiefly demands; they, however, never get further than subjectivity."

Indeed, the efforts of even such an artist as Rosa Bonheur cannot compare with the works of Raphael, Michael Angelo, Leonarda da Vinci, Titian, Murilo, Velasquez, Rubens, Van Dyke, Rembrandt, Turner, Reynolds, and Gainsborough. And in poetry Sappho and Mrs. Browning form a poor counterpoise to Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Dante, Petrarch, Camoens, Corneille, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Goëthe, Schiller, Byron, and Tennyson. Among orators where do we find a female Demosthenes? Among preachers where do we meet with a feminine Lüther, or a Savonarola, or a Wesley? As sculptors where is the counterpart to Michael Angelo or to Phidias?

A review of the great names in the history of Art makes one almost exclaim with Rousseau: "*Les femmes en général n'aiment aucun art, ne se connaissent à aucun, et n'ont aucun genie.*" (Woman as a rule loves no art, understands none, and has no genius.) Nor among scientists and inventors shall we find any woman who can challenge comparison with Bacon, Newton, Galileo, Stephenson, Darwin, Edison, or Marconi.

In ethical matters, man is more just and more honourable; but woman is more thoughtful and more sympathetic. Man is sometimes coarse and vulgar, whilst woman is apt to become spiteful and vindictive. The superior strength of man has often been used to bully and cow the woman, and the latter has sometimes *en revanche* adopted falsehood and deceit as a means to obtain her ends. But if one considers the sexes from the standpoint of crime, statistics are eloquent in the superiority of women as law abiding citizens.

In Japan, for instance, out of every hundred criminals only three are women. In many parts of Europe the percentage is only ten; in France fifteen; and even in Great Britain, where the average is highest, there are not more than twenty-five women out of every hundred criminals. The percentage is, of course, highest in those countries where women have the most freedom, and lowest where they are kept in a state of surveillance and economic dependence.

As to the species of crime committed, it is found that women are not, as a rule, given to crimes of violence, though they contain sometimes exceptions like Kate Webster or Mrs. Pearcy. Among minor offences, petty pilfering at large drapery stores is often practised by rich and cultured ladies; and the writing of spiteful, and even indecent, letters is often the work of respectable, and alas well-born, women.

Among more serious crimes, infanticide is more often committed by women than by men, and is usually a frantic attempt to conceal the birth of an illegitimate baby. The

throwing of vitriol on some hated rival is generally, too, a feminine act of spite, but it is fortunately of rare occurrence in this country. As to the crime of murder itself, women are more apt to employ poison; in fact, out of every ten poisoners seven are found to be women. This is, of course, due to the fact that women's inferior physical strength renders them less likely to employ other methods of compassing their ends.

Such human monsters as Jegado in France, Zwanzigger in Bavaria, or Van der Linden in Holland, were all women, who used poison in an indiscriminate and quite casual way to avenge some small, slight, or petty injury, to remove an obstacle from their path, or make some small gain. Their position as nurses enabled them to gratify their terrible taste for murder and cruelty, and the Dutch miscreant is said to have injured no less than one hundred and two persons, and to have killed outright twenty-seven! In appearance these viragos were short, thin, ugly, and vulgar; they were all addicted to petty thefts, and prone to bad temper and deceit, even from infancy—curious and terrible examples of feminine depravity.

Another and more interesting poisoner was the notorious Marquise de Brinvilliers, who practised her nefarious arts on her relatives, and was punished for her crimes with all the barbarities of the French judicial system of the seventeenth century.

These wholesale dealers in death have been passed over, and the case of Mary Blandy has been chosen on account of its greater psychological interest. The tragedy which follows takes one back to the spacious days of George II, when England was just beginning to change from an agricultural to an industrial country, from a nation living on its own resources to one dependent for its very existence upon foreign trade.

WHY DID HE LET HIMSELF BE POISONED?

or

A STORY OF REAL CRIME

Years ago, before the time of railways, there lived at Henley-on-Thames a certain wealthy solicitor of the name of Blandy. Henley was at that time a very small place, unconscious of its coming celebrity as the great aquatic centre of the world, and Mr. Blandy occupied one of the best houses there, not far from the beautiful shady banks of the silver Thames. Though a man of no strong character, and no extraordinary shrewdness, as the only lawyer for many miles round he had enjoyed an excellent practice, and was reckoned by his neighbours as a wealthy man. His marriage had been ordinarily happy, but he bestowed nearly all his affection upon his only child, Mary Blandy. She was a charming, accomplished girl, and was as much spoilt by her mother as by her father; in fact, Mrs. Blandy, who was a vain, foolish woman, encouraged Mary to become wayward and disobedient.

As Mr. Blandy had given out to the world that his daughter would inherit a dowry of £10,000, the comfortable country house was frequently full of suitors; in fact, nearly all the eligible bachelors in the neighbourhood paid her attention, and many wooers came from distant parts of the country. Mary was flattered by so much attention, and her nature, which was selfish, vain, and shallow, began to deteriorate; for pleasure, when unbalanced by a sense of duty and religion, generally produces a certain hardness, and even cruelty, if its desires are crossed or obstructed. But at that time none of the many suitors detected beneath the gay, charming exterior of Mary Blandy the secret lurking cruelty that lay hidden in her heart, and the heiress still remained the centre of a bevy of gallant admirers, and the spoilt darling of her fond parents.

About this time a certain Scotch officer arrived at Henley on recruiting duty; the brother and nephew of a peer, he naturally excited great interest in the little riverside town, and all were anxious to entertain him. Mrs. Blandy was especially eager to enjoy the social prestige of entertaining such an aristocratic guest; for, like too many of our country-women, she was a thorough snob, and her daughter shared her social ambitions.

The young Scotch officer had little to attract the fair sex as to his person; for he had a small insignificant figure, and his face was pitted with smallpox; but his aristocratic connections proved all sufficient, and, like Caesar, "he came, he saw, he conquered", and Mary Blandy was soon passionately in love with him, or with his position.

At this point, however, Providence interfered to warn the Blandys of their peril, and a rejected suitor, jealous of the successful rival, informed Mr. Blandy that Cranstoun had a wife and several children living in Scotland.

Mr. Blandy at once interrogated Cranstoun, and he was reluctantly obliged to admit that the accusation was true. "But," said he, "my marriage has a flaw in Scotch law, and I am going to have it annulled. When this has been done—and it will very soon be effected—I will marry your daughter."

"No, you shall not," said the justly-infuriated solicitor. "You have deceived us all; you must leave my house this minute, and I wish never to see you again."

For the time the adventurer was obliged to leave the house; but he soon found means to re-enter it, owing to the foolish infatuation of Mrs. Blandy, who had set her heart on her daughter making an aristocratic marriage. She was at the time exceedingly ill, and she prevailed upon her weak, good-natured husband to allow Cranstoun to become once again a frequent visitor at the house; in fact she persisted in having her future son-in-law always at her bedside; it was he who

handed her the food, and the medicine which the doctor ordered.

Her illness terminated fatally, and now that the father was bereft of his invalid wife, he once more promptly ordered Cranstoun to leave the house, and abandon all pretensions to his daughter's hand. "You have a wife of your own, and it is absurd for you to pretend to be engaged to Mary."

"You will regret this," muttered the adventurer, as with baffled rage he left Henley and returned to Scotland.

But before he left he had arranged an abominable scheme with Mary Blandy, which it is amazing to think that she should have been willing to execute. She agreed to poison her own father. Her long career of unchecked pleasure, and foolish indulgence on the part of her parents, was now bearing bitter fruit.

Still, it remains an extraordinary circumstance that an average girl of the upper middle-class, who apparently inherited no criminal taint, should have been ready to become a parricide. It is strange, too, that such an unattractive person as Cranstoun could inspire a passion sufficient to induce her to commit murder, and run an enormous risk, and that, too, only for a possibility—the possibility of a marriage should her lover succeed in his suit for nullity.

Evidently, Mary Blandy possessed a criminal psychology; and in such cases the motives and methods of reasoning are almost invariably strange and abnormal. The plot was continued by correspondence, and the lover always alluded to the arsenic, as "powder to clean Scotch pebbles", which was the euphemism employed by the culprits. This phrase was no doubt used to guard against discovery, should their correspondence fall into alien hands; but quite apart from fear of detection criminals nearly invariably avoid using plain English about their nefarious projects, and usually employ slang, or euphemisms; they thus escape the disagreeable necessity of being obliged to call each other thieves and murderers.

Mary, instigated by Cranstoun, now began craftily to prepare the neighbours for her father's death by stating that strange music had been heard in the house, which portended death within twelve months; and she also informed the servants that his wraith had been seen by her lover, who possessed the Scotch power of second sight.

Here, again, it is interesting to note (especially in these days when eminent men like Oliver Lodge and Conan Doyle are endeavouring to popularize spiritualism) how very often crystal-gazing, fortune-telling, planchette, and other forms of occultism have been utilized by criminals.

During the winter, poor old Blandy showed symptoms of slow poisoning by arsenic; but in those days the action of arsenic was very little understood, and the miserable girl was permitted to pursue her work unhindered. The poor man suffered a great deal, and he lost several of his teeth. He still loved his daughter and looked for sympathy from her; but she brutally called him "a toothless old rogue, who would be better in hell".

Here, again, it is extraordinary to notice how a weak, doting affection will persist in wilfully deceiving itself. Here we have a lawyer, a man of trained reasoning powers, and of sufficient shrewdness to acquire considerable means, who continues to trust, and even love, a girl who is slowly poisoning him, and who openly abuses him! This blind trust is still more often shown by women, who over and over again allow themselves to be deceived by the most shallow artifices of some adventurer who has captivated their affections; though it is often a curious point in such cases for the psychologist to decide as to how far their intelligence is at fault, and how far their passion is so strong as to cause them to appear to trust, when in reality they are aware that their lover is a rascal. Like many female poisoners, Mary was very brazen in her actions, and administered the arsenic in such large doses that the victim

complained about the bitterness of his tea, and an old charwoman who took half a cup that he left was nearly killed by it.

A little after this, another servant from a similar cause fell dangerously ill for three weeks. The affectionate daughter now changed her tactics, and for the future employed water-gruel in lieu of tea as the safer medium for administering the poison. She mixed the gruel herself, and with the same strange lack of caution warned the servants not to touch it, as it would "do" for anyone who tasted it. Here, again, it is very strange that none of the servants saw fit to take any action after such a confession, especially when two of them had suffered from strange attacks of mysterious sickness. Did they not suspect something? And if so, why did they not interfere? No; with that strange impassiveness and apathy which so often characterizes the English lower orders, they remained quiescent.

By July, Cranstoun had discovered that his Scotch marriage was indissoluble; and yet, though he could no longer have any hope of marrying Mary, he still urged on the murder. The dose was increased, and one day the victim complained that he felt as though he had a "fire-ball" inside him. The only comfort that he received from his daughter was to be informed that he could never recover as long as the "fire-ball" remained. The poor man no doubt at this time began to suspect the cause of his prolonged illness, but he never breathed any word of protest to the doctor, or to any of the servants; he preferred to hope either that he was mistaken, or that his patient, suffering, and tender love would at last touch his Molly's hard heart, and re-awaken those natural filial feelings of affection that she had given evidences of as a little child—but in one point he remained firm; he refused, with that persistent obstinacy which often accompanies a weak character, to sanction her attachment to Cranstoun, or to agree to his entering the house.

The doctor seems to have suspected nothing, and the wicked scheme was still pursued towards its fatal end. As her father's suffering increased, Mary's dull conscience began at last to prick her as she watched her patient victim. One day he spoke to her so lovingly that she exclaimed: "Oh, father, don't; every word you say is like a sword of fire piercing my heart." She then owned her wickedness, put all the blame upon her lover, and promised never to see him again, if her father would forgive her. "Oh, father!" she cried, "do not curse me."

"I, curse thee!" he replied. "No; I bless thee, and hope God will amend thy life."

But even after this touching scene of love and forgiveness, the unnatural girl pursued her nefarious course, until at length she aroused general suspicion in the household. Her father refused now to touch the gruel, and as one of the maids was about to throw it away she caught sight of a glittering white powder at the bottom of the dish. She showed it to a friend, who kept it to be examined by an apothecary. This was done after Blandy's death, and was found to be white arsenic.

The unfortunate man seems to have been unable to avoid the poison, which the wicked girl still continued to mix with his food, and after a terrible paroxysm of agony, he cried out:

"Molly, I was like to have been poisoned twenty years ago, and now I am verily poisoned after all."

Whether influenced by fear of detection, or whether moved by a transitory feeling of pity for her father, Mary then ran upstairs, and brought down her lover's letters, and also a small packet, and threw the whole lot quickly into the fire. But on this occasion she had not been alone with her father; a servant was also in the room and had heard the father's strange statement about being poisoned. With proper presence of mind she quickly picked the letters and the packet out of the fire, and in the latter she distinguished the words: "Powder

to clean the pebbles". In spite of this fact, and the knowledge that not only her father but all the servants suspected her, she had the effrontery to write to Cranstoun the following letter:

> Dear Billy
>
> My father is so bad that I have only time to tell you that if you do not hear from me soon again don't be frightened. I am better myself. Lest any accident should happen to your letters, take care what you write

Knowing that the servants could no longer be depended upon, she gave this letter to a visitor at the house, asking him to be kind enough to post it for her. But suspicion was now very general, and the visitor opened the letter and copied its contents; whilst he took the letter itself and gave it to Mr. Blandy.

Once again the unfortunate solicitor forgave his much-loved girl; for some love, like the love of Christ, knows no limit, and he only exclaimed: "Poor love-sick girl! What will not a woman do for the man she loves!"

The next day Mr. Blandy died, and just before that, Mary offered the manservant £500 to elope with her, which he refused to do. Like many unbalanced people, Mary Blandy now went from the one extreme of careless effrontery to that of useless terror, and that night she begged the maid to hire her a post-chaise, and to fly with her to London. Her proposal to the manservant shows that her pretended love for Cranstoun was on a very low plane of passion, and of snobbery, otherwise how could she have wished to elope with her own servant? Probably terror now rendered her partially distraught, and ever since she had been obliged to remain indoors her one idea was to escape.

The abnormal criminal mind often pursues some course of conduct which, if achieved, is disadvantageous to itself; and yet it persists with crass stupidity in pursuing its ends. "*Quos Deus vult perdere prius dementat*". So the death of Mr. Blandy deprived Mary of her only real friend and protector, and left her without defence against a hostile world. The suspicions of the doctor and of the servants were now, at last, thoroughly aroused, and the unhappy girl was arrested. At the trial in March, 1752, her lawyer endeavoured to show that the girl had only intended to win her father's consent by means of a love potion; but she was found guilty, and executed at Oxford on 6th April.

Her guilty partner Cranstoun, however, escaped from Scotland to Boulogne. There, however, some French officers, who were related to his wife, were about to punish him, when he fled to Furnes, where he took refuge in a monastery, and died a Roman Catholic.

THE WOULD-BE POISONER

In all the curious annals of crime it would be difficult to find any more strange combination of the terrible, the passionate, and the humorous, than that which confronts one in the celebrated case of the beautiful Madam X, and her clandestine lover le beau Léon.

Many years ago at Paris, a commercial traveller, who used to collect his letters at an office of the Theatre Français, was surprised to find a note in an unknown handwriting, and still more surprised when he read as follows:

> My darling, I have seen your husband, and I am glad to notice that his illness is increasing. His lips are quite white, his eyes hollow, and his face pale. I think we may hope to be rid of him within a month.

And then in a postscript:

I will bring another little packet to-morrow.

The bagman, who was not sure whether the note was a practical joke or not, but on reflecting that chance or some mistake might have given him the opportunity to prevent some horrible crime, took the letter to M. Goron, the celebrated chief of the Paris Police. He at once gave orders to apprehend anybody who might call at the office of the Theatre Français for any letter addressed for C. B.

The very next morning a fashionably-dressed lady of striking appearance went to the poste restante and asked for any letters for C. B. The police agent asked her to be so kind as to accompany him. Strangely enough the lady raised no complaint, and asked no question till they were both in the cab, when she asked in what direction they were going. On being told that she was being taken to see M. Goron she became quite silent; and her twitching hands and white lips alone betrayed her nervous agitation. But when alone with the world-famous detective, she assumed a defiant, and even threatening, demeanour. She exclaimed: "Why have you had me brought here? I am an innocent woman and this is a scandal."

M. Goron could not help admiring her beauty, as she stood at the table in front of him; her gestures were brusque and her voice harsh, but her lovely blue eyes flashed and sparkled with anger.

The detective then availed himself of the dramatic ruse of suddenly throwing to her across the table the fatal letter. The result was immediate. The tall defiant lady suddenly collapsed, and became the most humble of suppliants.

The unhappy woman fell on her knees, exclaiming: "Mercy, mercy! I am a poisoner. It was I that wished to kill my husband; but I alone am guilty. He has only obeyed

me; you must not punish him. Ah, if only you knew how I hate that man—my husband. To have him there, always near me, is a torture worse than death. For I love the young man who wrote that letter. I love him from the bottom of my soul. He is my lover, and to be with him is Heaven. And then afterwards, to return to my home is hell. Each time my husband's lips touch my flesh it seems to me as if a red-hot iron burnt me. At any price I had to end such a life; I prefer crime to a daily torture. But I swear to you that my lover is innocent."

The next instant she attempted to kill herself with a pair of scissors that lay near her on the table; but M. Goron seized her arm in time to prevent her doing herself any harm.

The lover was the next to appear, whilst the lady was taken to another room. This latter, a young and handsome dandy, surprised the officer by his frivolity and gaiety; and even the august presence of M. Goron failed to check his chuckles and outbursts of laughter.

"Do you consider a poisoning case a subject for laughter?" inquired the chief.

"Ha, ha, if only you knew, you would laugh, too!"

"Well, what is it?" said M. Goron.

"Well," he explained at last, "the lady is very pretty, and she threw herself at me, so I took what the gods sent me. Soon, however, she urged me, while her husband was reading the paper in the saloon, to poison him. In a kind of joke to humour her I promised to do as she wished. So every week I bring a little packet of bi-carbonate of soda. Ever since then she has redoubled her caresses, and she keeps saying: 'Now I know that you love me, because you even consent to commit a crime for me'."

His statement was verified by the good health of the husband, when digestion had been improved, and by the presence of twenty-four little packets of bi-carbonate of soda in his desk.

When, two hours later, they were both confronted in M. Goron's bureau, the lady exclaimed: "Léon, you are lying. Why not confess? I prefer prison to disgrace."

"What!" he replied. "Did you really believe that I would risk the guillotine *pour tes beaux yeux*."

"Coward!" she shouted, and marched towards him, whilst he drew backwards to the door.

"You coward! And I believed in your love! Cannot he be put in some dark dungeon?"

It is interesting to notice how the woman was desperately enamoured of M. Léon as long as she believed him to be a murderer, and only lost her infatuation when she discovered that he was innocent.

This is due to the extreme subjective egoism of bad women; they judge of any person entirely in relation to their conduct towards themselves. Her touchstone for Léon's character was his devotion to herself; so long as she believed that he was so devoted to herself as to be willing to run the risk of the guillotine, he was adorable, but when she discovered that he was guiltless she treated him as a despicable coward.

As French law only punishes acts and not mere intentions, M. Goron thought it unnecessary to pursue the case.

He dismissed the lover; and then, turning to the lady, he said:

"Madame, you tried to commit a dreadful crime. Take care, the law will watch you, and if any accident befalls your husband the case will be absolutely clear."

Strangely enough, after this event, the lady and her husband—a very wealthy financier—lived quite happily together, and she broke off her relations with her lover.

This police record, which is borrowed from the "Memoires de M. Goron", gives a strange insight into feminine psychology, and proves over again how much a woman's religion and morality depend upon how she bestows her affections. Her

intense hatred for her husband, and her reckless and cruel attempts to kill him, were entirely due to her mad infatuation for M. Léon. But as soon as she recognized the frivolous character of his passion her whole character changed.

Love is for Man a thing apart
'Tis Woman's whole existence.

THE DREAM CRIME

Now that Sir Oliver Lodge and Conan Doyle have created such an intense interest in psychical phenomena, the old problem of the significance of dreams is once again attracting the attention of the public. The oldest of all books—the Bible—gives a very prominent part to dreams, and the actions of many of its characters are influenced by these strange warnings; so why should we disbelieve in their occurrence nowadays? If Joseph and Daniel were able to see into the future by means of dreams, may not the following story told by M. Goron be also worthy of credence?

In January, 1891, an old woman of the name of Madame Bazire was discovered strangled in the small room that she rented at Vincennes. The old lady was very religious, and the little room was ornamented by a quantity of crucifixes and images; her body was found lying on the floor with the face to the ground, covered by a heavy trunk with four castors.

Every report concerning Mme Bazire gave evidence of her good character. She attended Mass every morning, and every evening she went to Vespers. She lived very economically on her small income of £50, and owed nothing. She had been last seen at nine o'clock going to Mass, and she had said that she would come back soon, as she had some repairs to arrange for in her room. On the next day people noticed that her daily paper had not been taken in, and that no reply was given to their knocking at the door.

It was only after forcing the lock that the murder was discovered.

M. Goron himself visited the room, examined the body, and conducted the examination of the other tenants and neighbours. The most anxious to give information was an old woman, whom we will call Mme X; and experienced detectives generally distrust witnesses who are too eager, almost as much as those who are too reserved.

At first Mme X endeavoured to fasten attention upon an old collector of alms, who frequently visited Mme Bazire; but a visit to this amiable philanthropist soon convinced the detective of his complete innocence. Suspicion then attached itself to a young butcher, who was engaged to the dead woman's niece. Suspicion seemed to be developing into certainty when this young man, who did not bear a good reputation, was found to be in possession of a louis, and some linen which resembled that which Mme Bazire used to possess. He explained that a former mistress had met him in the tram and given him the money and the linen as a present. She was, he said, only known to him as Adèle, and she lived near the Arc de Triomphe. Improbable as the tale seemed to be, it nevertheless turned out to be true, as the police succeeded in discovering the woman, who confirmed his story.

M. Goron again returned to his suspicions of Mme X, especially when he learnt that she had often complained about the murdered woman as a religious bigot, and as causing her intense annoyance by rolling her trunk on the floor overhead. The dead woman had used the trunk for her books of devotion, and according to Mme X its movement was "like that of a tramway". Moreover, Mme X had quarrelled with many of the neighbours, and on one occasion had been seen to throw a handful of ashes at Mme Bazire. Still, the neighbours averred that on the whole she was a good soul, and would be incapable of ever hurting a fly. A third visit to the old woman proved equally

unproductive of any evidence of guilt, and M. Goron returned home to ponder over the mystery of the assassination. What motive could Mme X, or indeed, anyone, have had to kill her? But that night the Chief had an extraordinary vision.

"I saw," he writes, "the room of Mme Bazire with its Virgins and St. Josephs. The old lady was returning from Mass with her big book under her arm. She was out of breath, and she sat down on a chair to rest; then she rose, opened her door, and went on to the landing to look for her trunk which she rolled into the middle of the room with a lot of noise. All of a sudden an old harridan pushes the half-open door wide open, and enters the room. She held a cord in her hand which she kept brandishing as if it were a weapon.

"'I have had enough of your bouncings,' she cried. 'Ah! Thou shalt no more wake me up with your tramway, you dirty beast.' And throwing herself on to Mme Bazire, who had not the strength to resist, or even to utter a cry, she passed the cord round her neck and tugged with all her might. A rattle, and all was over. Mme Bazire did not move again.

"Then I recognized the harridan as Mme X, who said with a foolish laugh: 'Here, take your cursed box, old bigot Thou shalt not annoy me any more.' And I saw in my dream the hag place the trunk on the body of her victim. She then looked out on the staircase to see if anyone was coming, and hastily took hold of the clock, which she concealed under her apron, and went away, locking the door behind her. I woke with a great start, bathed in perspiration."

M. Goron felt convinced that his vision was true, and that he had seen everything exactly as it really occurred.

"But magistrates and juries cannot convict on dreams. How then to prove her guilt? Obviously, it would be of prime importance to discover the clock; where, then, had she put it? I sent for Bastide, who excelled in dealing with the illiterate; and he left me with his usual phrase 'I shall succeed'.

"He found Mme X ill in bed; he, however, soon succeeded in getting her to chat with him in a friendly way.

"Bastide said easily, 'I am only here for a small formality.'

"'What is it?'

"'Well, after all, your action was quite natural! I am sure if I had had an annoyance like that, an old hag always rolling a big box overhead, I should have got rid of her.'

"Her eyes sparkled: 'Ah well, it was not difficult.'

"'But what have you done with the clock?'

"'Why, it's there under my bed.'

"She then recounted the crime in all its details, with extraordinary gusto.

"'I had to kill her; the wish was stronger than I. I had just received from a shop a parcel fastened with some stout cord; and I said to myself, this will do to strangle her with, and I put it on one side. On Monday morning I was once again awakened by her rolling her box: she was just back from Mass. I jumped out of bed and bounded up the stairs: the door was open, I leapt upon her, threw her down, and passed the cord round her neck. She was quite alone and never even said "Ouf"; a child of six could have killed her. Then I took her cursed trunk and put it on her back, and said, "You shan't roll your dung-cart overhead any more, old beggar-woman!" Lastly, I took the clock she liked so much and said to her, "Thou shalt never again hear thy clock strike".'"

His account confirmed the vision in every respect. Mme X was convicted of the murder, and having been found to be insane, was sent to Saltpetrière to become the servant of Dr. Vigoureux.

Though this particular person was considered to be insane, those who are familiar with criminal annals well know for what slight motives and what paltry gains vicious people will commit abominable crimes. The average man prefers to consider such monsters as insane; but only too often they are simply abnormally cruel and selfish.

CHAPTER IX

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THE investigation of all crime is depressing, because it shows us to what depth poor human nature can fall; but the saddest spectacle of all is afforded when the criminal is of tender years. How does it come about that children of sixteen, and even fourteen years of age, can actually become murderers? What part does heredity or environment play in the development of such abnormalities? Or how far can it be attributed merely to individual depravity? But before considering that question it will be of interest to deal with another problem which arises incidently from the Road murder. It is with reference to the duty of priests or doctors concerning confessions made to them in their professional capacity.

Should a priest reveal a secret told to him in the Confessional? Or should a doctor make public a confidence made to him in the Consulting Room? What if the confession involve a crime? What if it be a confession of murder? This is one of those very difficult questions where opposing duties clash. Every good citizen is bound to render assistance to the State in the suppression of crime; on the other hand, professional etiquette and ordinary loyalty forbid the doctor, and still more the priest, to reveal secrets committed to their trust. The State, by its laws, may order the priest to give evidence; but the conflict of jurisdiction is very dubious. The old struggle between the Empire and the Papacy bears witness to the intrinsic difficulty of the problem.

How far may the State lawfully go in its own jurisdiction? Ought, for instance, Peculiar People to be punished for obeying St. James? Should Christian Scientists suffer for refusing the aid of doctors or drugs? Ought Quakers to be imprisoned for refusing to enlist?

As a citizen, of course, a clergyman ought to expose a murderer, but as a father confessor he ought to regard the seal of the Confessional as inviolable. So in a lesser degree the doctor, who in these materialistic days is beginning to take the place of the priest, feels under an obligation to maintain a rigid secrecy as regards the confidences of the patient made to him in his professional capacity.

But quite apart from the Catholic doctrine of the secrecy of the Confessional, or the professional reticence of doctors, there is the natural tendency to guard anybody who throws himself upon your protection. The old Israelites had their six cities of Refuge, and the Middle Ages tempered the barbarity of the times by the use of Sanctuary in their churches and monasteries. So many people at the present time will assist an escaped prisoner, or guard the secrets of an offender against justice. Among some races this feeling of sympathy for the offender becomes a serious menace to the welfare of Society; this is the case, especially in Ireland, where a mistaken sentimentality often defeats the ends of justice, and renders the task of punishment exceedingly difficult. The English are naturally a very law-abiding people, and the poor often regard the stipendiary magistrate in the light of a friend; and before the regular business of the court commences, his time is frequently taken up by a crowd of people—especially women—who come like so many Queens of Sheba to test this modern Solomon with hard questions.

Still, in all countries there is the natural feeling that prompts one to remain inactive, and to refrain from giving information to the police against an offender. How many people

could surprise wives by informing them as to the peccadilloes of their husbands? And how many servants could give very curious information about visitors to the wife in the husband's absence? How many parishioners condone lapses on the part of clergymen rather than send a formal letter of accusation to his Bishop? How many business men are known to evade their proper share of the Income Tax! And how many buyers receive illegal douceurs from manufacturers! And how is it that so many officers in a certain branch of the service are always explaining their affluence by the existence of a hypothetical fortune on the part of their wives? If everybody told what he knew about his neighbour the world would witness some strange revelations. As a rule, however, various factors combine to prevent these troublesome disclosures from being made public.

First, there is the natural tendency of laziness and apathy, which shows itself beneath the comfortable phrase of "minding one's own business"; secondly, there is the feeling that one will do more harm than good by interference; thirdly, there is often a soupçon of sympathy for the offender, or for his family; fourthly, a somewhat cowardly fear of not being able to establish your accusations; and lastly, a pious hope that in spite of very damning appearances one may after all be mistaken in one's suspicions. Of course, a knowledge of actual crime, especially of murder, is a much more serious matter than a mere suspicion of immorality, and many a man who would shield an erring Don Juan will not protect a murderer. So Dickens represents Charley Bates, the youthful criminal in "Oliver Twist", as eager to give up Bill Sikes for the murder of Nancy, though quite willing to assist in stealing and other roguery; and Dickens is true to life, which is full of these strange inconsistences.

In few things has the world changed so much as in the position held by women and children in the present day as compared to their position some fifty years ago; the change concerning

women has been the greater, but that concerning children has also been considerable. The old maxims of our grandparents that children should be seen, and not heard, of "Spare the rod and spoil the child", and of implicit obedience without asking questions, now seem strangely antiquated. The long explanation of the fifth commandment in the Catechism, with its insistence on submission to authority must vex, and even amuse, the modern flapper, who terms her father "old bean", and who goes out to dances accompanied by her "best boy". The emancipation of the child is following fast upon the emancipation of the mother. Not only is Jack as good as his master, but Jill is as good as her mistress. The abolition or restriction of corporal punishment in the School, the introduction of Montessori methods of instruction, and the latitude accorded to children as to the choice of their lessons, are all signs of a great change in our attitude towards children. One political candidate at the General Elections of 1923, even held a special meeting at which only children were present; some of his intelligent listeners reaching only to six years of age—but doubtless suitable critics of such a shallow sentimentalist!

Possibly some idealists will soon begin to advocate the admission of children to the franchise; they would doubtless have firm convictions as to the length of the holidays, and probably there would be several "whole-hoggers" on the abolition not only of corporal, but of every species of punishment. Possibly there might be a special post in the Cabinet for Child Welfare held and administered by some intelligent child!

The ancients reverenced Old Age, but our present-day idealists make a fetish of youth. There is, of course, a very great charm in youth, just as there is an irresistible appeal in the freshness of Spring. Youth is hopeful, optimistic, and audacious, whereas Age is crabbed, cautious, and dull. Children, too, appeal to us, because they are so helpless, so confiding, and so credulous. Like Charity, they hope all things and believe all

things. So, owing to a growing sympathy for the helplessness of youth, much of our recent legislation has been directed towards the better protection of children and young people. No doubt our grandparents carried the system of repression too far; but at the present time there is a great danger of moving too fast in the opposite direction. The relaxation of wholesome discipline in the home and in the school is fast leading to insolent insubordination—to a sort of Bolshevism in the home. It must not be forgotten that whilst there is much that is sweet and innocent in children, there is also another side to their character which needs constant supervision, and strict discipline. Those who have watched—and who has not?—little babies in a passion, and have noticed how they become red in the face with anger, and how their veins stand out upon their tiny foreheads with impotent rage, will not be so scandalized at the Catechism when it tells us that "we are born in sin and the children of wrath". The acquisitive tendency of human nature, too, is made manifest by the eager desire of the infant to clutch hold of any object within its feeble grasp.

As years advance, too, the sex impulse will often begin to show itself in some disagreeable manner, or else its repression may form what the psycho-analysts term "the sex complex". The Victorians, with what some term prudish hypocrisy, and others a wise reticence, observed a rigid taboo on all manifestations of curiosity of the child on this topic. It was the Blue Beard's chamber of the family's house, and the room was kept fast locked with the key in the parental pocket. Freud, though no doubt much of his teaching is grossly exaggerated, has at least shown us that many of our actions are unconsciously influenced by the great compelling factor of Sex. Many of his examples are improbable, and some are even ridiculous, but there remains a substratum of scientific truth underlying his observations. Children are, no doubt, in many cases largely influenced by the promptings of their physical nature, or by

the repressions of desire; and at this period of their life they need very wise and careful guidance in this matter.

How best to deal with young offenders, is one of the many problems of penology. For many years I watched my father, Captain Joshua Brookes, acting as superintendent over 800 boys at the Feltham Industrial Schools. The system in vogue, then, was a semi-military one, and corporal punishment was freely used. The results were, on the whole, satisfactory, and a great number of the boys made good citizens as farmers in Canada, as seamen in the Merchant Service, and as band boys in the Army. It has now become a Borstal Institute, with somewhat similar results. But in neither case is the training productive of such good results as that given in Barnardo's Homes. For in this latter case there is less of red tape and militarism and more of the beneficial influence of a home, and much attention to their separate needs. Of those sent out to Canada no less than ninety-five per cent have turned out well—a higher percentage than can be claimed by any other agency.

The Redbourn case may, indeed, be considered as partially due to the relaxation of wholesome discipline which was especially noticeable in the years which followed the end of the Great War, but the tragedy at Road occurred in the palmy days of Good Queen Victoria, when children occupied a more subordinate position than they do at present.

THE ROAD HILL HOUSE MYSTERY

The little village of Road is situated on the confines of Somerset and Wiltshire, about four miles from Frome and three from Trowbridge.

For some years Mr. Samuel Saville Kent had been living here in a large house surrounded by its own grounds, because he found it conveniently situated for the discharge of his duties

as deputy inspector of factories. He had married twice, and there were children of the first wife, as well as by the second, living with him. His first marriage had not been fortunate, since his wife had become insane. As in the case of George III, and many other mad people, she had recovered her sanity for some years only to lose it again, and finally died insane in a home for the mentally afflicted in 1852. Next year Mr. Kent married Miss Pratt, his children's governess. The step-mother established friendly relations with the two eldest girls; but she was not so successful with Constance and William, whom she had had as pupils in the schoolroom.

In June, 1860, there were seven children living with Mr. Kent, four by his first, and three by his second wife. The four elder children consisted of the boy William, who was fifteen years of age, and three daughters, Mary aged twenty-nine, Elizabeth aged twenty-seven, and Constance aged sixteen. In addition, there were, besides Mr. and Mrs. Kent, a nurse named Elizabeth Gough, a cook, and a housemaid. All of these slept in the house; there were also three outdoor servants.

On the night of 29th June, Mr. Kent, at about eleven o'clock, after everybody had gone to bed, went as usual carefully round the house to see that all the doors and shutters were securely fastened. After that he retired to rest at about 11.30, in the bedroom which he shared with his wife and little girl.

On the first floor were the bedroom and dressing-room occupied by the Kents, and over the hall the dressing-room and night nursery occupied by Elizabeth Gough and the two youngest children, a little boy of four years old named Francis Saville, and Eveline, a little baby girl. Upstairs on the second floor were four bedrooms, one occupied by the cook and housemaid, another by William, a third by Constance, and a fourth by the two eldest daughters, besides two lumber rooms.

Then, during the night, something strange and terrible occurred, for when the Nurse Elizabeth awoke at five o'clock,

she found that the cot in which the little boy slept was empty. This did not at first alarm her, as she supposed that Mrs. Kent must have come in and taken the child into her own room. She knocked at the Kents' bedroom door at six in order to find out about the child, but as she received no answer, not liking to awaken them she waited till seven, when she knocked once again.

"Are neither awake?" inquired Mrs. Kent.

"Neither awake? Is not Master Saville with you?"

"No, nurse, certainly not," was the quick reply.

"Well, ma'am, he is not in the nursery."

Now, indeed, there was general alarm in the house. Nurse rushed upstairs to question the two eldest girls as to whether they had seen Saville, and whilst she was doing so Constance came to her bedroom door to listen. But all expressed ignorance of his whereabouts. The housemaid, Sarah Cox, informed the Kents that the drawing-room door and window were open, though she had fastened them last night, and as no force had been employed and no footprints were visible, it was obvious that the door had been opened from the inside! Mr. Kent, however, was at first convinced that his little boy had been kidnapped. His duties as inspector had brought him into collision with various people, and, as he was not very popular, he imagined that some personal enemy had stolen the child out of revenge.

Full of this idea he drove at once to Trowbridge in order to give information to the police, having just sent William to fetch the doctor, and informed Morgan the local policeman of what had happened. Meanwhile in his absence several people had arrived to assist in the search, and one of them, a small farmer named Berger, made the fatal discovery of the missing child. On entering the privy, which was concealed by a shrubbery, and was about 25 feet from the house, he saw a pool of blood on the floor, and spots of blood on the seat. On putting in his

arm he pulled up first a blanket and then a body, which had not sunk down into the cesspool, because they were caught by the trap. Subsequently the cesspool itself was searched and a dirty piece of flannel was discovered stained with blood.

Dr. Parsons arrived now and found that the child had its head nearly severed from the body, and that there was also a deep wound in the side. The house was searched by the police for the missing weapon, but all the carving knives were in order, and no garden tool was missing. Apparently no one examined Mr. Kent's razors or noticed that a certain green case was empty. Mr. Kent, on his return with Superintendent Foley, soon learnt of the appalling discovery.

After his first surprise, Mr. Kent began to realize that this foul outrage was not the work of any revengeful factory hand from the outside world; but that the deed had been committed by someone inside his own house. The drawing-room window had most certainly been quietly opened from the inside. Moreover, the bestowal of the body in the disused closet showed an intimate knowledge of the grounds. Who then had done it?

One of those who had knelt down and joined in the family prayers on Friday night, and whilst he read those solemn words of entrusting their souls to God during the coming night—one of them had been planning this cruel murder! Who could it be? His dear wife, as he knew, had never left his side during the night in her delicate condition, for she was expecting yet another child; she was quite incapable of carrying such a fine boy as Saville. Again, the idea was of course absurd, becauses he loved her little boy as much as he did.

Could Elizabeth Gough have killed the child entrusted to her care? What possible motive could she have for such a deed? She was, moreover, a good-tempered and religious young woman. That very morning at six she had said her prayers and read a chapter in the Bible; at least, so she said, and he felt sure that such had been the case.

One cannot help pausing to reflect on the change of manners shown in this little incident; for how many nurses now would read a chapter of the Bible before commencing their duties?

He liked the nurse, and felt sure she was incapable of such a cruel act. But who then remained? Saville was dead, and the two youngest children were, of course, out of the question. Was it then a servant, or (horrible to believe) was it one of his own children by his first wife?

The cook and the housemaid shared a room together, and from that fact and from their character, and from the entire absence of any motive, he felt convinced that they were guiltless. What had the nurse meant when she had said to her mistress as she was brushing her hair, "Oh, Ma'am, it's revenge!" Revenge for what? And executed by whom? Clearly she did not mean one of the men employed at the factories, because Elizabeth knew as well as he did that the dastardly crime had been perpetrated by an inmate of the house—whom did she then suspect?

On Monday came the inquest at the Red Lion Inn at Road, which was conducted by Coroner Sylvester. The nurse, the housemaid, Policeman Foley, and Parsons the doctor, were all summoned as witnesses, and all duly gave their evidence. The crowd in the court were very anxious that Constance and William should be examined, and they manifested considerable hostility against them.

In order to secure them a fairer hearing the coroner adjourned the inquest and re-opened proceedings at Road Hill House, where both of them were called as witnesses; but both of them averred that they had heard nothing throughout the night. The whole affair remained an inscrutable mystery, and a verdict of "Wilful murder by some person or persons unknown" was returned by the jury. This inconclusive result, however, was very badly received in the neighbourhood, and the coroner

was freely accused of burking the inquiry. It was alleged that he ought to have called Mr. Kent as a witness, who had, indeed, volunteered in that capacity.

An inquiry was now opened by the local magistrate, and Elizabeth Gough was taken into custody. She was examined again, and quickly released. As the whole country was now interested in the mystery, Scotland Yard sent down one of its smartest detectives in the person of Mr. Whicher to investigate the affair. He arrived at Road on 15th July and at once commenced a systematic inquiry.

Whicher soon learnt the history of the Kent family, the mental debility of the first wife which finally culminated in mania, and Mr. Kent's marriage with the governess in the year succeeding his wife's death were soon known to him. He learnt, too, of the eldest boy's quarrel with his stepmother and of the subsequent reconciliation before his death which occurred in 1858. But what most attracted his attention was the story well known in the village of how Miss Constance, when she was only twelve years old, had run away from home dressed as a boy, accompanied by her brother William, and had gone to an hotel at Bath. When questioned the children were soon found out, and having passed the night in the police cells were returned to their home the next day. But whereas William had expressed sorrow for his actions, Constance had given defiant replies at Bath, and even when she confronted her parents she had remained sullen and resentful.

But what struck the clever detective most of all was the fact that Constance had changed her clothes, and cut off her hair in the outdoor privy, exactly where the body of the murdered child had been found. Was this a mere coincidence? Or was it but another instance of the imitativeness of the criminal mind?

Whicher also prosecuted inquiries among Constance's schoolgirl friends. One of them, Miss Moody, informed him that Constance had told her that she disliked the children by the

second wife because they were much better treated. Another girl, Miss Hatherall, also told him that Constance had complained about the unfair partiality shown to the younger children. When, too, they asked her if she was not glad that the holidays were near at hand, she had said that others might be glad to go home, but that she was not at all looking forward to doing so. All these various things convinced the detective that the murder had been committed by Constance; but these after all were mere suspicions and he needed some more conclusive proof.

His acute mind at once fixed upon the likelihood of some blood-stained garment being still in existence. If only he, instead of that dull-witted Foley, had been present to make the search on the morning of 30th June! True, Dr. Parsons had accompanied Foley in the search, and both had given evidence at the inquest that they had found no bloodstains on any of her clothes. But the surgeon had drawn Foley's attention to the fact that the nightdress had not the appearance that one would expect if it had been a week in use, for the starch was still very much in evidence in the cuffs and frills. Foley had relied on the absence of bloodstains; but what if the murderess had changed her nightdress after the commission of the crime? Foley scouted this idea; but to Whicher it seemed a very likely contingency. Where, then, was the garment worn during the murder? Or had she done the deed in her ordinary apparel? If so, why were they free from stains? No; she must have changed her nightdress, and had either concealed, or destroyed, the tell-tale garment.

Determined on his line of action, the detective went to Road Hill House, and asked if any list of linen was in existence. He was given a list and found that Constance Kent had three nightdresses belonging to her on 29th June. Where were they? He confronted Constance, and asked her to account for the fact that she now had only two nightdresses. Constance informed him that one of these had been lost in the wash. This incident

had occurred on the Monday following the murder, but the fact had not transpired at the inquest, to which the laundress had never been summoned.

A certain Mrs. Holly was the laundress, and on Monday she reported to Mrs. Kent that the list sent on Saturday was incorrect, because one nightdress that had been included was never sent. The missing nightdress belonged to Miss Constance. But as Sarah Cox, the housemaid, was certain that she had placed it in the wash-basket, Mrs. Kent was very angry with the laundress, and told her she must find and return the missing garment within forty-eight hours. On examining Sarah, the detective soon discovered that she had left the basket for a minute; because Miss Constance had asked her to fetch a glass of water—just time enough to extract the nightdress.

Whicher arrived at Road on 15th July, and on 20th July he arrested Constance Kent, and in spite of her tears and protestations of innocence he had her lodged in Devizes Gaol.

The trial followed quickly, and Constance was defended by Sir Peter Edlin. Beyond the evidence of the two schoolgirls —Miss Moody and Miss Hatherall—and also the evidence concerning the nightdress, there was no fresh elucidation of the mystery, and the trial resulted in the acquittal of the accused, on her father entering into recognizances of £200 for her appearance if required.

Whicher was now very much abused for having made such a foolish mistake, and sentiment, which is very often so very misleading, set in against him, and also against the unfortunate Mr. Kent. "Why," said they, "had he not been examined at the inquest? Why had he at once driven off to Trowbridge? Possibly so as to throw away the weapon. Why was Elizabeth still in his service?"

Then a very ugly rumour got about in the village where he had never been very popular. The murder, it was said, had been done by the father to screen himself from exposure. He had

been carrying on a shameful intrigue with the nurse, and whilst with her he had been frightened by the awakening of his little son; to stop his cries he had first suffocated the child, and then had inflicted the subsequent wounds in order to divert suspicion from himself. A scandalous lie that injured not only himself but Miss Gough as well.

It was therefore thought better that she should leave, and she went to another situation at Isleworth. But poor Mr. Kent still remained exposed to the malicious insinuations of ignorant gossip. He knew, of course, that he was innocent, and alas! he knew, too—he must have known—who was the guilty one. He had offered a reward of £100 for the detection of the offender, but he can only have done this as a blind. His two eldest daughters had been born before his first wife's mind had shown any signs of weakening; during her illness, from 1837 till 1842, all the four children that were born had died. Constance, however, was born in 1844 and William in 1845 just after her recovery. Shortly afterwards his wife's mental condition became rapidly worse, and in 1845 she had been placed under restraint. The two elder girls had got on well enough with her, but Constance seemed generally sullen, reticent, and defiant. His eldest son had quarrelled with his second wife, but had become reconciled with her before his death in 1858. William lacked the vigour to show much initiative, and was certainly incapable of perpetrating such a crime. By the simple process of exhaustion the father felt more and more convinced that his daughter Constance was the guilty one.

Early in October, however, the unfortunate nurse was again brought before the magistrates, having been fetched from her new situation in Isleworth. This examination lasted for four days, and no less than 30 witnesses were examined without any material advance being made in the solution of the mystery. Miss Constance was again called, and she stated, as an evidence of the affection she bore to Saville, that she had been playing

with him on the very afternoon of the murder, i.e., Friday, 29th June. Mrs. Kent stated that she had shut the nursery door as she went to bed at 11, and that she had often woken up in the night but had heard nothing, save some noise in the drawing-room in the early morning.

Elizabeth Gough was again set free, and was complimented on the way in which she had borne three undeserved arrests; in fact, she appears to have been a young woman of very good character. The acquittals of Constance and Elizabeth in July and October turned popular suspicion once again on to Mr. Kent.

In November, a certain lawyer who was one of the local magistrates, commenced a very farcical inquiry with the purpose of endeavouring to fasten the guilt upon the factory inspector. This investigation, however, also proved futile, save that it tended to increase the general feeling in the neighbourhood against the unfortunate father. His love for the child and his pride in him were all discounted by the unjust suspicion that he was in love with the nurse, who happened to be an attractive young woman.

Had not Dr. Parsons given evidence in October that he believed the child's death was due to suffocation? And had not the sapient Saunders expressed his entire belief in the absolute innocence of Constance? So strong was the popular prejudice, that in November an application was made to the Queen's Bench to quash the findings of the coroner's inquest and to hold a fresh inquiry. This application was based on the plea of misdirection of the jury, and on the failure to call Mr. Kent as a witness. The application was refused, and an outcry was raised that the Law was screening the Road murderer.

The agitation might have been prolonged as in the subsequent Tichborne case, had it not been that public attention was diverted by the great Civil War in the United States, which broke out in 1861.

Who was it, then, that during the night of 29th June, had committed this foul crime? It was, as Whicher had guessed, none other than Constance Kent. Profoundly jealous of the children by the second marriage, she had treasured every sentence in which the younger ones had been praised at the expense of the others—especially when Saville was compared to her favourite William. Every act (real or imaginary) of partiality was noted in the vindictive memory of this sullen girl. Not insane, yet hardly normal, as being born so recently after her mother's recovery, this strange girl had brooded silently over the slights that she considered she and William had received. Her running away in 1856 was to escape from what she considered her stepmother's unfairness. But on her return from school for the summer holidays she began to conceive a terrible method of vengeance against her stepmother. She would strike at her through Saville, and in such a way that she would never be detected. For why should Saville be praised and William despised?

Constance knew well where her father kept his spare razors, and in his absence on 27th June, she opened his wardrobe and extracted one of those swift messengers of death from its green case and concealed it in her bedroom. Then she visited the outside closet, which lay near the house concealed in the shrubbery, and here she secreted a candle and some matches.

Then came the afternoon of 29th June, and with horrible callousness she romped with the little victim she was about to destroy. She heard her father read the family prayers; she herself had discontinued her private prayers for more than a year. She watched the nurse retire to her ill-fated room at 9 o'clock. She then wished her parents good night and went upstairs to bed—but not to sleep. She undressed, in case of a visit from her sisters, and waited in bed till all was quite still and peaceful in the house—all save herself.

Now soon after midnight with the deadly razor in her hand she crept like a thief downstairs, dreading every creaking stair

and every accidental noise. She reaches the nurse's room, noiselessly opens the door, and there in his cot lies her helpless little half-brother. The nurse does not stir, neither does the child wake, nor does any presentiment of danger awaken the mother in the room opposite. Gently she withdraws the blanket, turns the quilt tidily down, and takes up the innocent sleeping child in her arms and wraps him in the blanket. Then she creeps downstairs, puts on some goloshes she had placed in readiness in the drawing-room, throws open the window with one hand, whilst with the other she holds the unconscious child. With her hand over the child's mouth she passes the front of the house, and quickly reaches the closet. She lights the candle, and then with a firm hand she most cruelly draws the sharp razor across the infant's throat, so that the blade penetrates even to the spine. The blood is slow in coming, and so to make quite sure it shall die she inflicts a deep wound in his side. Then child and blanket are pushed down into the vault. The loathsome deed is done, and then, moving quietly and systematically as before, she returns to her bedroom, leaving the window open to simulate an outdoor murderer.

Did she sleep? Surely not well; surely her sleep was full of ugly dreams, and from an early hour she must have watched the coming dawn, and waited with awful fear the dread discovery that must follow. She heard, no doubt, the nurse inquiring for her charge, and her stepmother's reply, then the nurse coming upstairs questioning her elder sisters. What was known? She must find out, so in her guilty eagerness she came to her bedroom door, and listened. No; they knew nothing—she had not been seen.

But there remained in her possession the razor, and the bloodstained nightdress. She had wiped the former on a piece of flannel she had taken from a waste-bag, and which she had thrown down the privy. She had secreted the razor in her room with the intention of returning this dangerous evidence of guilt as soon as possible to its proper place. She had also washed

the incriminating nightdress and thrown away the discoloured water into the pan, and had put on a clean one in which to sleep. Early next morning she had examined the nightdress, and as it appeared to be free from any tell-tale spots, she replaced it in her drawer with the other clean one.

At about ten the police and doctor arrived. How her heart beat when Foley and Parsons examined her linen! Whicher would have seen that one nightdress in the chest of drawers had never been starched, and then by a more careful examination would have detected two bloodstains. The doctor did remark on the fresh condition of the nightdress which had only one night's wear, but fatuous Foley was quite satisfied. Later in the day she replaced the razor in its green case; her father had never noticed its absence, and the police had not found it in her bedroom. All was now well, and she felt fairly confident of her security, though not entirely so; for she still possessed the nightdress on which she had now more recently discovered two bloodstains. For five days after the preliminary search she kept hiding it in some different spot, until she burnt it in her bedroom, and threw the ashes on to the kitchen fire. Now at last she felt safe, since she had succeeded in explaining her possession of only two nightdresses by the possibility of the third one having been lost in the wash.

She seemed safe for a fortnight, and then all her fears were re-awakened by the news that a clever London detective had arrived at Road on 15th July. Then came the dreaded interview and his awkward questions about the missing nightdress. However, she had nerve enough to brazen it out; and yet she felt she had not convinced him. At last, on the 20th, came the fatal arrest, and she was, in spite of all her tears and protestations, placed in prison. She had made up her mind —if convicted, she would commit suicide. But fortunately the trial was quickly over, and she was free—free at last. She had outwitted everyone save Whicher.

But now there came a new terror—a fear lest an innocent person should be condemned for her crime. In October, Elizabeth Gough was tried again, but the guilty girl had decided to confess rather than allow a miscarriage of justice. But she, too, was acquitted.

But even now her troubles were not over, for she knew that her father was suffering under unjust suspicion; and she felt almost sure, too, that he guessed her own guilt. His residence in Road became impossible, and in 1861 he moved into Wales. All this was due to her, and though she was unrepentant and hard she loved her father, and could not bear to see him suffer. She almost confessed to a relation in Wales, and soon afterwards, finding her position in the family impossible, her father placed her in a Convent in Paris.

In 1863 she left Paris and entered the Home of a High Church Anglican Sisterhood at Brighton. Here she came under the excellent influence of Father Wagner, who acted as priest to the establishment. During her preparation for confirmation and for Holy Communion, Constance felt a happy renewal of her religious feelings, and as she resumed her prayers, a desire to confess her crime grew stronger and stronger.

At length, just before Easter, 1865, she not only confessed her guilt to Father Wagner, but she also expressed a desire to make it public. Accordingly she went up to London escorted by the lady superintendent and Father Wagner. They all interviewed Sir Thomas Henry in his private room, where she signed a confession of her crime.

At the trial which took place at Salisbury before Justice Willis, Constance pleaded guilty. Father Wagner gave evidence that he had known the prisoner for 21 months, and that her confession was entirely spontaneous. She was sentenced to death, but it was commuted to imprisonment for 20 years. Before her trial she wrote to her lawyer, Mr. Rodway:—

Devizes, May 15.

Sir,—It has been stated that my feelings of revenge were excited by cruel treatment. This is false; I have received the greatest kindness from both parents. I have never had ill-will towards either of them on account of their behaviour to me, which has been very kind.

Yours truly,

CONSTANCE E. KENT.

Dr. Buckmill, the medical officer who was deputed to inquire into her sanity, found that she was not mad, but that she magnified petty slights and trifling incidents into serious affronts. She gave him a minute account of the crime, and informed him of her intention of confessing had the nurse been convicted, and of suicide if she herself had been sentenced.

It seems to be a case where psycho-analysis would point to a repressed sex complex. The periods of her outbreaks at the age of nearly 13 and 16 indicate the disturbing effects of puberty. The strong philoprogenitiveness of Mr. Kent, as shown by his twelve children and his hasty re-marriage, was probably inherited by Constance, and in the absence of active exercise like hockey or tennis, or some hobby, or even a youthful love-affair, this tendency, finding no normal outlet, developed into crime. During the two or three days preceding the crime, she must have undergone a brain storm which, working upon a naturally unruly nature, found a dreadful vent in the murder of her brother. The choice of the closet, the dressing up in boy's attire, and the general violence of her character, all point in the direction of a sex complex as a key to her otherwise inexplicable action.

Her conduct during her long imprisonment was excellent, and she was released in 1885; but she only lived for a very short time afterwards and did not fulfil Baron Pollock's prediction about a marriage.

The following naïve confession of murder is taken from "The Criminal", with apologies to Havelock Ellis, the celebrated criminologist. The record displays in an appalling fashion the low cunning, callous egoism, and greed, which characterizes the criminal child.

THE MURDER OF THE LITTLE CHILD

From the age of ten to seventeen the young of both sexes are often in some respects allied to criminals in their habits; they are deceitful, cruel, impulsive, and only too often addicted to bad sexual habits, and to gluttony and untruthfulness. They live entirely in the present, and seem almost incapable of abstaining from the gratification of some illicit desire owing to future pains and penalties. What could be more repulsive and inhuman than the state of moral insensibility of this detestable German child?

She was, however, quite ordinary in her appearance, well-developed physically, and fairly intelligent. She answered all the questions of the court calmly and lucidly, and showed no emotion or exitement of any kind, save when her eyes gleamed with anger as she spoke about the stale bread that she was given in the prison. The case was heard in Berlin during the year 1886, and she was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment.

THE CONFESSION

My name is Mary Schneider. I was born in Berlin in 1874 on 1st May. My father died long ago. I do not remember him. My mother is a machinist. She has often whipped me for naughtiness, and it is right that I should take away the stick with which she beat me, and beat her. I have gone to school

since I was six. I have been for two years in the Third Class; I stayed there for idleness. I have been taught reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, and also religion. I know the Ten Commandments. I know the Sixth; it is "Thou shalt not kill". A young lady of twenty who lives in the same house, has told me that she was just as naughty as I am, and that she struck the teacher who was going to punish her.

Some time ago in the yard I came behind a child, held his eyes, and asked him who I was. I pressed my thumbs deep into his eyes; I knew that I was hurting him, but in spite of his crying I did not let go until I was made to do so. It did not give me any special pleasure; but I have not felt sorry since. When I was a little child I stuck forks into the eyes of rabbits, and then slit open their bellies. I am very fond of sweets. I told people the money was for someone who wanted small change. I know that was deceit. I know, too, what theft is. Anyone who kills is a murderer, and I am a murderess. Murder is punished with death: the murderer is executed; his head is cut off. My head will not be cut off because I am too young. On 7th July my mother sent me on an errand. Then I met little Margaret Dietrich, who was three and a half years old. I told her to come with me, and took her by the hand. I wanted to take away her ear-rings. They were little gold ear-rings with a coloured stone. I wanted to sell them at a little secondhand shop in the neighbourhood, to get money to buy some cakes. My mother threw me down some money for the errand.

Whilst in the yard I noticed a window on the second floor which was half-open. I took little Margaret up the stairs to the second floor to take away the ear-rings, and then to throw her out of the window. I wanted to kill her, because I was afraid she would betray me. She could not talk very well; but she could point to me, and if it came out my mother would have beaten me. I went with her to the window, opened it

wide, and got her on to the ledge. Then I heard someone coming downstairs, so I quickly put the child on to the ground, and shut the window. The man passed by without noticing us. Then I opened the window again and put her on the ledge, with her feet hanging out and her face turned away from me. I did that because I did not want to look in her face, and because I could push her out more easily. I pulled out the ear-rings. Grete began to cry, because I hurt her. When I threatened to throw her out of the window she became quiet. I took the ear-rings and put them in my pocket. Then I gave the child a shove, and I heard her strike the lamp, and then the pavement. Then I ran quickly downstairs to go on the errand. I did not reflect that little Grete's parents would be sorry. It did not hurt me; I was not sorry; I was not sorry till I was in prison. I am not sorry now. The next day a policeman came to the house and asked me whether I had done it. I said, "No; I knew nothing about it." I threw away the ear-rings which I had hidden. I was afraid that they would search my pockets. Then another policeman came, and I told him the truth because he said he would box my ears if I did not tell the truth. Then I had to tell the whole story to a lot of people. Then they took me away in a cab to the mortuary. I saw little Grete's body undressed on a bed. I did not feel any pain and I was not sorry. I laughed, because some of the ladies asked me such curious questions. I wrote to my mother to ask her to send me some money, because we had only dry bread in prison."

The chief interest in the sad case which follows next is to be found in the mere fact of a boy of only thirteen murdering an adult, and in the difficult questions that arise from the phenomena of youthful depravity.

The common law of England has never adopted the theory and practice of the *patria potestes* of the Romans, by which

a father could execute summary punishment even up to the capital penalty upon any one of his household, including not only his slaves, but his children and even his wife. In English Law, however, the power of the parent has always been subject to various limitations; and even in the seventeenth century a child could bring a civil action against his father or mother.

In more recent times, by the Acts of 1861, 1868, and especially that of 1908, the protection of children against cruel parents or guardians has been guaranteed as far as possible by the State. Special courts have been instituted for children, and children are taken out of the custody of cruel or neglectful parents. Juvenile delinquents are sent to Reformatories or Borstal Institutions in lieu of prison, and every effort is made to encourage them to amend.

On the other hand, with reference to crime committed by those of tender age the Law has assumed that children under seven years of age are incapable of committing a felony or tort, and that the full age of capacity is not reached till the child be fourteen. In between the ages of seven and fourteen, this capacity has to be considered, and decided in accordance with the particular facts of the case.

In this particular instance the boy was thirteen years and ten months old at the time that he committed the crime; but he had attained his fourteenth birthday when he was tried at Hertford in July, 1921. A person under sixteen years of age cannot be hanged; but in dealing with this case, Mr. Justice Rowlatt expressed the view that in accordance with the Act of 1908, if a boy committed a murder at an age less than 16, and was not apprehended and convicted until he had passed his sixteenth birthday, he could be hanged. The learned judge, moreover, stated that he thought the framers of that Act were probably unaware of what would be the effect of the way in which it had been worded. In the Redbourn case, however, the question to be decided was simply as to how far the boy

had a guilty knowledge of his act, and was therefore liable to be found guilty of murder or manslaughter; for in this case the capacity for crime clearly refers to the time at which the guilty action has been committed, and not to the actual date of the trial.

THE MURDER AT REDBOURN

The village of Redbourn is about four and a half miles N.W. of St. Albans; it possesses a few silk and flour mills, and numbers a population of a little more than 2,000 souls. These latter had full provision for their spiritual needs, for in addition to the fine old parish church there were no less than four churches. A little distance from the centre of the village, situated upon the common, were a row of cottages, and in one of these dwelt an elderly widow named Seabrook, and her unmarried daughter May. Mrs. Seabrook had reached the age of seventy-one and was more or less of an invalid; she was therefore very glad that she had a capable daughter of twenty-nine like May to look after her. She was fortunate, too, in having a married daughter, Mrs. Jessie Freeman, who frequently came to visit her. Miss May Seabrook and her mother lived very comfortably together, and life ran on quietly and peacefully, if a little monotonously. It was, in fact, the ordinary methodical life of an English village. Everybody knew everybody else and there seemed no room for the tragic, or the unexpected.

On that winter's day of 27th January, Miss Seabrook had taken dinner with her mother as usual, and had drawn the water from the well and carried the bucket into the house. She then hung out some clothes to dry before the fire in the bedroom upstairs, and at about ten minutes to two she left her mother, who was preparing for her usual after-dinner nap. She locked up the cottage, and went off to where she worked

in the village, never for a moment anticipating but what she would find her mother in her usual health on her return for tea. For what should happen to her?

Mrs. Seabrook gradually dozed off, the fire burned cheerily, the clock ticked away monotonously on the mantelpiece; everything was, as it usually was, quiet, peaceful, and still. But hark! What was that? A small noise, like a window being softly raised and a bolt drawn back. Someone had entered the cottage with felonious intent. Death in the guise of a boy with a hammer is drawing near to the unconscious sleeping woman.

Next door to the Seabrooks lived another widow, Mrs. Litton, and with her a lodger, Mr. Ford, and her only son, Donald. Mr. Litton had died some few years previously, so that the boy had lacked the wholesome discipline of a father's restraining hand. At school, however, he had done fairly well, having reached the seventh standard. Mr. Laxton, the village schoolmaster, considered him an average boy, neither very idle nor very industrious. Fairly good at games and at his lessons, not openly insubordinate but somewhat sullen, taciturn, and obstinate. Once, indeed, he had to be punished for bullying another boy; but his chief peculiarity was an abnormal addiction to the reading of what are termed "penny dreadfuls".

After dinner on 27th January, 1921, Mrs. Litton left the cottage a few minutes before two in order to make some purchases in the village; she locked the front door and left her son in the garden, never suspecting that anything out of the common would take place before her return for tea at five o'clock. The boy went into the small garden at the back of the house, and then returned to see that his mother had really gone. He next went to the small barn at the bottom of the garden, and got out the hammer and put it in his pocket. For what purpose? For breaking into the cottage next door? For self-defence, or for attack? God alone knows; but it seems unlikely that he can have taken it for the first purpose.

He entered the next garden, as he had so often done before, and finding that the back door was locked, he succeeded in opening a window and so drawing back the bolt. He came to steal, as it appears he had done on a few occasions before. Mr. Laxton had promised that at Easter he would take to the Zoo any child who could produce seven shillings. His mother had given him sixpence, but he still lacked six shillings and sixpence to make up the necessary amount. In vain, however, he searched the kitchen downstairs; he could not find a single penny. No; he must go quietly upstairs and see if he could find anything there—after all, he had his hammer in his pocket in case of accidents.

Quietly he mounted the staircase and very cautiously he searched the back room—but still nothing rewarded his efforts. After all this trouble he felt he could not return empty-handed; the lust for illicit gain was upon him, and he very carefully opened the bedroom door, and peeped in. There on her bed lay old Mrs. Seabrook asleep. Stepping very gently, Donald Litton glanced at the table, hoping to see a few coppers or even some silver; but they had become cautious and nothing was to be seen. Full of vexation at being balked, the boy stepped back again into the other room. But let the rest of the terrible tragedy be told in the words of its perpetrator:

> "Then Mrs. Seabrook woke up and saw the door open. She got out of bed and came to the door and saw me. I was very frightened and I struck at her with a hammer. This was in the front room. She was standing in front of the doorway. She ran to the window and tried to open it. I caught her wrist and pulled her back on the floor. She knocked over the small table. I hit her with the hammer. Then I ran downstairs and up the garden and buried the hammer in Miss Weston's garden behind the barn. I came back and went to her house again.

She was coming downstairs. I pushed her over and she tried to get up again. I picked up the poker and struck her with it. She kept trying to get up and I struck her with the poker. The chair fell on the fire. I ran out and got down the well. I didn't hardly know what I was doing. I thought I would try and drown myself. I got down by pressing my feet and back against the opposite sides of the well. When I got to the water I let myself fall. As soon as I got in the water I struggled and got my feet against one wall and my back against the opposite one. I got up like this and went into the house. I took all my clothes off and put them in a small pail. I put them in the kitchen. Then I sat in front of the fire. At 3.30 Mrs. Freeman came home and knocked at our back window. She called: 'Mrs. Litton'; I said: 'Mother isn't in'. She then went to the wall and called 'Police'. She then went in the house and round past our gate. Then she came back with Mr. and Mrs. Bradshaw. Then a lot of neighbours and school-children came. They stood outside. Then a motor-car came and took Mrs. Seabrook away. My mother came home at 5 o'clock. I told her I had fallen down the well, and when Mr. Ford came home I told him so. Nobody knew anything about it except me. I don't think I have any blood on my clothes."

The account of the actual murder is probably correct, and it throws a dreadful light upon the character of the boy, who was ferocious enough to return to his work as a slaughterer, and to finish in the kitchen what he had already commenced in the bedroom.

The position of the blood on the bed and near the bed seems to contradict that part of the confession which speaks of the first blows being struck near the door, and may be an indication that the boy actually attacked the unfortunate

woman as she lay asleep in her bed, which would, of course, give him a great initial advantage. She then probably ran to the window to call for help, and tore the curtains as she clung to them for support.

It is difficult to understand poor Mrs. Seabrook's motive in coming downstairs; but probably her intellect was too dazed by the blows on her head with the hammer to render her capable of connected thought. Perhaps she imagined that the boy had gone away, and that she could leave the cottage to summon assistance.

The descent into the well may have been purely imaginary, and merely invented in order to explain his wet clothes; he had, of course, placed his wet clothes in the pail in order to cleanse them from blood. As the well had a diameter of only thirty-three inches, it is difficult to understand how he could have climbed up and down in the way indicated in his confession. Again, the chair may possibly have fallen into the kitchen fire during the unequal struggle, but it seems more likely that Litton endeavoured to add arson to his other crimes, and so obliterate all evidence of his misdoings.

The boy probably entered the Seabrooks' cottage at a few minutes past two, and got back to his own cottage at about half-past two; an hour later Mrs. Freeman, the married daughter, arrived, and to her great astonishment she found the kitchen full of smoke. She at once threw the burning chair into the garden, and then she turned to her mother whom she found lying against the wall. Her poor face was covered with blood, and she called out feebly: "Jessie, Jessie". Mrs. Freeman then went to fetch Mrs. Litton, and found the boy Donald sitting in his shirt before the fire, who informed her that his mother had gone to the village. She then went to the garden wall and called out: "Police, Police".

Mr. and Mrs. Bradshaw and several other neighbours now arrived, and when Miss Seabrook returned for tea she found

her unfortunate mother surrounded by a host of people in the garden. As her mother was receiving all the attention that could be given to her, Miss Seabrook went upstairs. She found the bedroom in a state of great disorder. The curtains near the window were torn, and there was blood on the bed and on the floor near the bed.

When she came downstairs a motor-car arrived and took away the wounded woman to the hospital at Hemel Hempstead. There she was examined by Dr. Georgina Davidson, the house surgeon, who found no less than twenty-eight wounds upon her head, of which eight were fractures. She found, too, a fracture of the left wrist. Some of the wounds could have been caused by falls, but several of them could only have been caused by the hammer and poker which were produced during the trial. Mrs. Litton identified the hammer which had been found buried in Miss Weston's garden, as stated by the boy in his confession. She gave evidence which confirmed her son's story.

On her return at five o'clock she had found Donald sitting in the kitchen in his shirt and knickerbockers. She asked him why he was dressed in that fashion and he said that he had fallen down the well, and that something had happened at Mrs. Seabrook's house. There was a bath in the kitchen, and his other clothes and boots were soaking in it. She washed the clothes the next day, and handed over the boots to the police who had called to make inquiries. She stated that she found Donald a good boy at home, and that he was kind to animals. Besides the confession, Litton made a statement on 28th January, which was, however, so palpably false that it is not worth recording. In this he admitted entering the cottage for theft, but denied the murder.

The second confession was no doubt due to fear produced in the boy's mind by the visits of the police, and his inability to endure the suspense. This is a frequent cause of confession,

especially with the young, and only very firm characters like that of Constance Kent can hold out against the continuous nerve pressure produced by anxiety, suspense, and fear of detection. The fear of detection acts upon the guilty just as the edge of a precipice acts upon the weak-nerved person who stands upon the brink and feels an inclination to throw himself over into the abyss. So Detective Askew, from New Scotland Yard, found no very difficult subject in Donald Litton.

On 2nd February, six days after the murder, he went to Litton's cottage and asked the boy to go with him to the police station. He already strongly suspected the boy, but he was not yet prepared to arrest him; he was waiting for developments. Whilst on the way, the boy inquired: "What do you want me down there for?" The detective explained that they wanted to verify certain statements that he had made. It was during the ominous silence which followed this statement that the boy's mind, tortured by anxiety and fear, finally succumbed to the strain. He felt that anything would be preferable to further suspense, and he suddenly blurted out: "If I tell the truth shall I get summoned?" The detective said that he could not make any promises as to that. The boy continued: "My only worry is if my mother gets to know; but I have it on my mind and I want to get it off. I killed Mrs. Seabrook." The boy then made the written confession in the presence of the three police officers.

Mr. Justice Rowlatt, who tried the case, was exceedingly caustic about the waste of money involved in the photographing of the cottage, and of the police. "What is this?" he exclaimed. "Just an ordinary house—a common cottage—I do think it a waste of public money." And again, later on in the trial with reference to the photograph of the poker, he exclaimed: "There it is, gentlemen. You have seen a photograph of the poker and now you see the poker itself." The judge, too, considered that the summoning of Mr. George Freeman, the son-in-law,

was quite unnecessary. "Is there any doubt as to the identity?" exclaimed the judge. "Go away then, Freeman. It is a perfect waste, and it is unnecessary—I have tried hundreds of murder cases, and it is only in this part of the country that this kind of thing is happening." Then again, later on, he said that it was abominable the way in which cases got overloaded in this part of England, especially in the metropolis, and that it was time somebody drew attention to it

At another point of the trial, he exclaimed: "Fancy having these elaborate photographs just to lock up a naughty boy. It has nothing to do with the case." The use of the adjective "naughty", to qualify Donald Litton, appears to be a meiosis of an unjustifiable nature, and makes one wonder what would have to be done for the judge to call it barbarous or wicked!

Mr. Justice Rowlatt did well to inveigh against waste of time and money by the police; but he would do better if he would protest against the still more vexatious waste of time and money caused by solicitors, who are proverbial for their unnecessary delays and extravagant charges.

The defence consisted in putting before the jury the theory that, the boy on seeing Mrs. Seabrook, suddenly became very frightened and struck at her from fear, and that the second attack was due to a sort of frenzy. Moreover, he contended that the boy could not have been capable of a guilty knowledge, on account of his tender age, and that there was nothing in his previous character to show that he had criminal instincts. The judge asked the jury to decide whether the boy committed the crime, and whether he had sufficient understanding to render him capable of committing murder. After a conference of only three minutes the jury found him guilty of the crime, and capable of committing it.

During the whole trial the boy, who was dressed in an Eton collar and dark blue suit, behaved with great calmness, and replied to the usual question: "Not guilty, my lord",

in a firm tone. He was quite collected in his manner, and he watched the swearing in of the jury with great interest, and even turned round to look at the general public behind him. He was given a chair by the direction of the judge, and so remained seated during the trial. The judge ordered him to be detained during His Majesty's pleasure, and declared that he had no power to give effect to a petition he had received by letter for his adoption. This singular choice reminds one of the old French adage: "*Chacun à son gout*".

CHAPTER X

BAFFLED MURDERERS

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THE INTENDED VICTIM KILLS THE ASSASSIN

HOWEVER cleverly the murderer plans his crime, it sometimes happens that matters do not pan out according to programme; sometimes the victim refuses to play his proper part in the affair; in lieu of taking it "lying down" he bites or scratches, kicks or hits in a very unorthodox and unexpected fashion. So what might have been a really artistic piece of work is converted into a rough and tumble fight.

Just such a desperate fight with a most tragic result took place in Northumberland Street as recently as 1861. For as Thackeray writes, in his "Roundabout Papers": "Have any novelists of our days a scene or catastrophe more strange and terrible than this which occurs at noonday within a few yards of the greatest thoroughfare in Europe?" The house in question was No. 16, an old-fashioned dingy house, which had been converted into chambers and offices.

At about 11.45 on the morning of 12th July, workmen heard two shots fired in fairly quick succession; but they were not alarmed, as the same sounds had often been heard previously. In fact, Mr. Roberts, who occupied the two rooms on the first floor, was known to amuse himself by practising shooting in his dusty ill-kept office. To again quote Thackeray: "What a cavern of terror was this in Northumberland Street, with its splendid furniture covered with dust, its empty bottles, in the midst of which a grim

agent amuses himself by firing pistols, aiming at the unconscious mantelpiece, or at the head of his customers!"

The front room indeed had been originally furnished in a very luxurious style. There were five good water-colours, handsome brackets, and beautiful statuettes all grimy with dust. There were costly inlaid tables, cabinets, and artistic ornaments. Over the fireplace was a handsome mantelpiece all studded with bullets. The only furniture still in use was an office table, where Roberts pursued his dubious avocation as a bill discounter and moneylender.

However, to return to our workmen, who continued their job without regard to the shots until some ten minutes later, they caught sight of a man with his face covered with blood, who put one leg out of the window as though meaning to jump, waving in his hand a broken piece of tongs. "For God's sake, what's the matter?" one of them exclaimed. "Murder has been done," was the reply. "Stay there; we will come up." But, as they found the doors locked, the workmen had to go over the way for help.

Meanwhile, the wounded man had made his way along a narrow ledge; for to have jumped directly down would have been certain death owing to the iron railings in the area. But he succeeded in reaching a wooden casing of water-pipe, and so jumped into a basket. He then endeavoured to climb over a high wall, but the workmen pulled him back by his coat tails. Breaking free from them he rushed down a narrow passage into Craven Street; but here his further progress was barred by several people. His hair and whiskers were burnt and his face covered with blood; still his only wish was to get away.

"You are wounded," they urged. "Am I? It's that damned fellow upstairs—Grey." "No person called Grey lives here; if you refer to the person you entered with some quarter of an hour ago, his name is Roberts."

The wounded man was taken to Charing Cross Hospital, where he gave his name as Major Murray. Meanwhile, the police and public had effected an entrance from the back yard, for both doors on the first floor were bolted.

On entering the chambers a horrible spectacle presented itself. The back drawing-room, in which most of the struggle took place, was a mass of broken furniture, and everything was smeared and streaked with blood. All the gloomy richness of the room was disturbed by the fight of two strong angry men who had struggled for a quarter of an hour like wild beasts in a cage. The walls, gilded tables, and backs of chairs were all smeared with blood; and near the window were lumps of thick gore, half an inch in height, where the fiercest fight had taken place. The broken piece of tongs which had done so much damage and had saved Murray's life, was coated with flesh and blood. Near the window, too, was a pool of blood and wine and dirty papers.

In the other room, crouching just by the door with his fingers on the handle, lay Roberts, the bill-discounter, in a dying condition. "How did this happen?" queried the police. "It was done by the man who has just gone downstairs." He also was conveyed to Charing Cross Hospital. His case was quite hopeless, as on his head alone were thirteen distinct terrible wounds, and some of them seven and eight inches in length. He was, in fact, literally battered to pieces. His skull was beaten in, his eyes closed, his cheek-bone crushed, and his whole face beaten to a jelly. He had also other severe injuries on his shoulders, arms, and hands.

Roberts was not anxious to discuss the tragedy; and his serious condition rendered questioning him a difficult matter. However, he stated that he had met Major Murray by accident in Hungerford Market, and as he knew him by sight as a director of a company in need of money, he had invited him to his office to arrange a loan for £50,000. He then (according to Roberts)

first shot himself in the neck and then attacked the money-lender like a demon with the tongs and a bottle.

On 19th July Roberts expired, and at the coroner's inquest the following deposition was read from Major Murray:

> "My name is William Murray, and I live at 32 Harley Street, and at Tottenham. I was a major in the Tenth Hussars; but I have sold out. On Friday morning, 12th July, I left London Bridge by a penny steamer for Hungerford; and I crossed that bridge at about 11.30."

The bridge the major crossed was the fine suspension bridge erected by the great engineer Brunel, in 1845; and in 1861 its existence on the Thames was nearly over, because very shortly afterwards it was removed to Bristol, where it now spans the Avon. Hungerford Market, too, with its shops for the sale of fruit, vegetables, and fish, was removed at the same time to make room for Charing Cross Station.

> "As I was going down the right side of the market, a man came up to me from behind and said: 'I believe I am speaking to Major Murray?' I answered: 'Yes, that's my name.' He went on: 'I believe you are a Director of the Grosvenor Hotel Company?' I told him: 'Yes; pray who are you?' He said: 'My name is Grey.' I asked: 'How do you know me?' and Grey answered: 'I have seen you at the meetings of the Company.' Grey added that he was a solicitor, and one of his clients was prepared to lend the Company £50,000. . . . It was the most extraordinary place I have ever seen—papers, bottles, pictures, lying about in a most disreputable manner. In a moment or two Grey, who had left the room, came back and took a

seat in front of me with a pen in his hand. He asked what interest we proposed to give, and I said in no circumstances would it be more than 5 per cent. He replied: 'That will do very well.' I asked him for his card, and he walked round behind me and began rummaging among some papers in a desk. Presently, I felt a slight touch on the back of my neck. There was the report of a pistol, and I dropped off the chair on to the ground. I was perfectly paralysed: I could not move any part of my body. My head, however, was quite clear. I was lying with my face to the fender, and after he fired I believe that he left the room. I soon felt life returning in my legs and arms, and I was just raising myself on my elbow, when I heard the door open and he came in again. He immediately walked up behind me and fired a pistol into my right temple. I dropped back on the carpet and the blood gushed all over my face and eyes and mouth in a regular torrent. He either stooped or knelt close behind me, for I could feel his breath, and he watched close to see if I was dead. I then made up my mind to pretend to be so. I felt that the bleeding was fast bringing me back to life all over my body, which was tingling to the finger-ends. I knew if I could get on my feet I could make a fight for it.

"After he had knelt behind me for some short time, he got up and walked away. And I then opened my eyes and took a look round and saw a pair of tongs within a few inches of my head. Feeling that strength was returning to me, and that there was the whole length of the room between us, I seized the tongs and sprang to my feet. He was then at the window, and turned and faced me. I rushed at him and made a heavy blow with the tongs, which missed. I then seized them short by the middle,

and made a dash into his chest and face, which knocked him over on to his back. I got my knees on his chest, and tried to smash his head with the tongs. They were too long, and he got them in both his hands firmly. I struggled hard for some time to get them away, but he was as strong as me, and I could not do it. I looked round for something else to hit him with, and, close to my right hand, I saw a large black bottle, which I caught in my right hand, and, shaking the tongs with my left to keep him occupied, I hit him full with all my force in the middle of the forehead, and dashed the bottle to pieces. That made him quiver all over; but still he did not let go the tongs, so I caught hold of a metal vase and dashed it at his head with all my might; but I missed him. Then, as I saw that there was nothing else at hand, I set to work desperately to get the mastery of the tongs. After a long struggle I succeeded. As they came into my hand I lost my balance and fell back, but was up again in an instant.

"By that time he was rising into a sitting position, which gave me a fair full blow at his head with the tongs, and I gave it him with all might and main. I repeated it three or four times. He hid his head under the table and tried to escape my blows. Then I hit him on the back of the neck, and, in order to disable his hands, I hit him hard over the wrists. I then thought he was sufficiently disabled, and tried to get out, but the door was locked. I went through the folding doors into the front room and tried that way, but that door was locked, too. In returning, I met him face to face walking towards me. I took a step back in order to get a full swing, and hit him on the head again with the tongs. He fell forward on his face through the folding doors, as though he were dead. I pushed his

feet through the doors and shut them, and then threw up the window. I saw two men in the yard and called them to come to my assistance. At the same time I got on the window-sill and took my measure for a spring into two baskets in the yard below. I dropped into them, climbed over the wall into the next house, got through a passage, opened the door, and went into the street. That is all I have to say. I have not the slightest notion in the world why he should attack me. I never had any communication with the man, good, bad, or indifferent, and I did not even know that such a man was in existence."

It was suggested to the Major by one of the solicitors at the inquest that it was strange that, when attacked, he should not have screamed for help.

"I did not scream," was the reply, "and I recommend you, sir, if you ever have to fight for your life, to fight in silence and not to waste your breath in calling out."

The matter, as far as the statements made by the combatants went, would have remained for ever a mystery had it not been for certain discoveries made by the police of a name and address on Mr. Robert's blotting-paper: and a subsequent search disclosed three letters from a lady of the same name amid his papers. As so often happens it was a case of *Cherchez la femme*, for though women, as we have seen, are less criminal than men in their personal actions, they very frequently cause men to commit all sorts of crimes and tragedies.

In this case the *causa belli* was a young and beautiful woman of about twenty-four, who appeared in court with a heavy veil, and very reluctantly gave evidence that explained the motives of the quarrel. The name of the lady was Anne Maria Moody, and at the age of eighteen she had become the mistress of Major Murray, who had taken a house for her at

Tottenham, where he frequently visited her. She called herself Mrs. Murray, and they lived very happily together. Unfortunately, like so many legitimate and illegitimate spouses, she did not keep within the handsome allowance made to her by the Major; so, being in need of money, she applied to Mr. Roberts, whose name as a moneylender had been given to her by a friend of him. She borrowed originally only £15, for which she was to repay £20 after a lapse of three months. But once in the toils of the moneylender, she, like so many others, could never again get free. It is so fatally easy to borrow; it is so very difficult to repay. If it be hard to meet one's current expenses on a certain income, how much more difficult must it be to do the like as well as pay the additional interest!

When she was unable to meet her liabilities, the moneylender informed her that she need not trouble about that, if she would be willing to accept him as a lover. Moreover, as his feelings grew more ardent he continually urged her to leave the Major, and to go away and live with him in Scotland. Miss Moody declared that though this state of affairs had been going on for four or five years, she had never responded to the moneylender's overtures, and that she had not had an hour's enjoyment in his society. "I have never been delighted to be with him, and in my heart I have never felt so." Yet part of one of her letters to Roberts, reads as follows:

> I cannot express my heartfelt thanks for the pleasure your note has given me. In fact when I sat down to write this I fancied I could have filled sheets of paper with love to you, but somehow I now feel that my thoughts are checked, and I only want to lie (she means lay) my head on your shoulder and cry tears of joy, not unmixed with sorrow, for the many happy days I have passed with you. Ever yours, Anne.

She explained that this letter was written about ten months after his dishonourable proposal, and about two and a half years prior to the tragedy. It is, of course, possible that her continued visits and affectionate letters were due to an overwhelming desire to keep the moneylender quiet at all hazards, and that her story of their relations is correct. It, however, seems more probable to suppose that such a desperate infatuation would have required more than sweet words on which to feed its flames. For some months he had been following her in cabs and stopping her in her walks; moreover, he wished to introduce her to his wife and family. For Roberts was a married man and lived a life of outward respectability and decorum.

It is to be feared that Miss Moody had for some years been playing a double game, taking money from both, and hoping for good fortune to escape discovery. She had been induced by Roberts to give an account of Murray's movements, so that it was from Miss Moody that the moneylender had known where he would intercept his rival and at what time he would be likely to meet him. His jealousy had urged him to see them together, just as in "Our Mutual Friend" Headstone felt that he must see Eugene Wrayburn in the company of Lizzie. He needed this as a stimulus to his jealous hate.

It was very soon after he had seen Major Murray and Miss Moody with their child and nurse at the Crystal Palace, that he decided to commit murder. In fact, not one of the three actors in this tragedy comes out with an unscathed reputation. The major, who had left one of the crack regiments in the British Army, had, of course, no right to have a mistress; Miss Moody was wrong in the first place to leave her home to join the major; in the second place her duplicity in the whole affair is exceedingly bad; and, of course, Robert's whole conduct is totally indefensible. He probably intended violence when he purchased the pistols and rendered himself expert

in their use, and certainly when he enticed the major into his office and secured the doors. Even when dying he could not speak the truth, or admit his murderous intentions, but passed away with a lie on his lips.

Major Murray was not nearly so seriously injured as Roberts. The only serious wound was the result of the first shot—a wound in the back of the neck just against the spine. Dr. Canton, however, easily extracted the bullet, and the other wound was only superficial. His recovery, therefore, was rapid and complete. The jury found a verdict of justifiable homicide, which was received with many signs of public approval. Roberts fell a victim to his own trap, an engineer hoist with his own petard—one of that innumerable company of men and women who have ruined their lives for the sake of an unlawful passion. It seems difficult to understand in what way he intended to conceal his crime and dispose of the body. For he would know that he would have been seen entering No. 16 in company with the major and that the latter would be missed at once by Miss Moody. Possibly he intended to commit suicide as soon as he had destroyed his hated rival.

THE STRANGE AFFAIR AT TWICKENHAM

This story commences like those of G. P. R. James's, with two horsemen, who, on a fine summer evening (28th June, 1861), might have been seen—apparently in amiable conversation—sauntering along the leafy lanes of Twickenham. The elder one was of a bold and resolute appearance, a man of the world of some fifty-five years of age, but still hale and vigorous; the younger, who was only three-and-twenty, was of a frailer build and somewhat delicate, and even effeminate in appearance. They were returning from visiting an ex-Queen at Claremont, and were on their way to visit a Duke at Twickenham.

Those who are acquainted with our modern Twickenham, with its mean shops, crowded streets, cheap cinemas, and ugly hoardings, may well wonder at it being chosen as the residence of princes. But the Twickenham of 1861 was very different from the Twickenham of 1925; like so many other places it has paid the penalties due to progress. Yes; Progress has its penalties as well as its gains. Indeed, some of us are inclined to doubt whether the advantages really outweigh the losses, whether, indeed, Progress has contributed to the happiness of mankind. Certainly the last few decades have witnessed some wonderful inventions, and our means of rapid communication have been multiplied. But how far is this Progress only mechanical rather than cultural and moral? Is the power to fly, for instance, in an aeroplane any adequate compensation for the possibility of whole towns being destroyed by bombs? Have not rapid communications corrupted good manners? Is the modern road-hog who kills and runs away any improvement upon the gentleman who drove his gig? Does not the modern Moloch of the motor-car claim almost as many victims in time of peace as the old-fashioned war chariot of the ancient Britons destroyed in war? Again Progress may be good as regards Utility; but it is certainly antagonistic to Art and Beauty. Twickenham, for instance, has been ruined by the advent of the tram and the motor-bus, and the commercial instincts of the jerry-builder. Machinery has been, indeed, a double-edged gift to mankind. It has brought in its train huge cities, ugly factories, clouds of smoke, and vulgarized minds. The cinema makes less appeal to the intellect than the theatre; and the rapidity and ease of our methods of transit tend to rob us of the use of our legs, and of the calm necessary for reflection. We are, in fact, as that wise Czech dramatist pointed out, in danger of being ruined by our own inventions. There is, in fact, a terrible tendency to vulgarize everything, to standardize everything in order to meet the commercial

rapacity of a few and the mean intelligence of the many. But in 1861 Twickenham was still a beautiful village—a place that still merited the praises it had received from Defoe and Horace Walpole; and the exiled French nobility had, therefore, chosen it as a suitable place of residence.

At York House lived the Comte de Paris, at Lebanon House resided the Prince de Joinville, whilst the Duc d'Aumale had taken up his residence at Orleans House. Louis Philippe had died at Claremont in 1852, but his widow still lived there. All these French nobles, as well as the King and Queen, had fled from France when the second Republic was proclaimed in 1848. Louis Philippe, the citizen king, had left Paris quite unostentatiously by the back door of the Tuilleries and had been smuggled into England by the consul at Havre as plain Mr. and Mrs. Smith—strangely different from their stately visit to Windsor in 1844! But modern French Kings have never fought for their thrones. Louis XVI sheltered himself in the Convention, whilst his gallant Swiss guard died fighting for him at the Tuilleries. Louis XVIII scuttled into Belgium when Napoleon began to advance towards Paris. Charles X set up no defence when Louis Philippe was chosen king in his place; and that latter monarch only sought refuge in flight when the Parisian populace declared against him. In fact, they all acted like our James II, and not like Charles I.

Mais revenons à nos moutons, that is to say in this case to our two horsemen. The elder was the Baron Alfred Louis Pons de Vidil, and the younger man his son, Alfred John de Vidil. The elder man was simply a Baron by courtesy; his father, who was a prosperous glove manufacturer, had been granted the title by Louis Philippe, the bourgeois King who based his policy on popularity with the middle class. The son, having married an English lady of considerable wealth, had retired from business, and taken up his permanent residence in London. The wife had died and left her money in such a

way that the Baron had only a life interest in it. Baron de Vidil was a member of several good clubs, and was quite an acceptable person in fashionable circles He had for a time been an attaché at the French Embassy, and he was a man of considerable social gifts. But like many men who love society he was very extravagant, and having sold his life interest for £4,000, he was in June, 1861, very hard pushed for money; and as he sat sipping his wine and cracking his walnuts at the Clarendon Hotel in Bond Street, he must have often thought that he would like to inherit the capital sum of £30,000, which would become his should delicate young Alfred die intestate. They were very different in temperament and disposition; the father doubtless despising the weak character of his son, the son fearing the overbearing temper of the Baron. He was too much in awe, however, of his father to refuse to fall in with his wishes in any ordinary matter; so he had accepted his invitation to visit the ex-Queen.

They had met at the Clarendon Hotel in Bond Street and travelled together from Waterloo to Twickenham, where two saddled horses were awaiting them. They had trotted over the Bridge from Hampton Court to Moulsey, and passed through Esher on their way to Claremont; then, having paid their visit of ceremony to the ex-Queen, they had returned to Twickenham a little tired from their ride of seventeen miles. It was at this point that the conduct of the Baron began to awaken first curiosity, and then uneasiness, on the part of the son. No man can harbour the design of destroying another (unless he be a very hardened criminal) without betraying his anxiety by something curious in his conversation or deportment. There is no doubt that the younger man had become vaguely uneasy, and even suspicious, when the Baron under one excuse or another, continued to prolong their ride and seemed especially anxious to find some secluded and unfrequented lane. Yet the fact that they were both on horseback and that it was broad daylight,

served to reassure the youth and made him loth to harbour such suspicions concerning his father.

The Baron, on the other hand, was intent upon his purpose, and cursing every stray pedestrian who by his or her presence hindered the execution of his fell design. To the surprise of the younger man he avoided the main entrance to Orleans House, and turned down into a lane at the side, probably that which is now known as Orleans Road, where there was at that time a high wall on one side and a thick hedge on the other. But it will be best here to quote from the son's own account of what happened in the deposition that he made whilst lying ill at his uncle's house.

"I had got a little up this road when he said that he had made a mistake and that we must turn back. I turned back. It is very shady in that corner, and I saw that nobody was near us. I got a little ahead of the Baron (he was obviously not free from suspicion of his father's movements); he was on my right. I had gone a pace or two when I felt a violent blow on my head. I turned round and saw the Baron's hand uplifted, with something in it. With this he struck me another blow, and had again raised his arm when I hurried on my horse, and having gone on a little way I got down quietly, putting my leg over as usual, and ran to where a man and woman were standing."

He then threw himself down on his knees, and, catching hold of the woman's clothes, exclaimed: "Oh mother, protect me." The two riderless horses next appeared, and lastly the Baron came up looking very red and excited. He exclaimed that his son had been thrown from his horse and had hit his head against the wall; and the son was still in such abject fear of his unnatural parent that he acquiesced in this falsehood. The Baron then got over a fence, and for the time disappeared. The man and woman then led the unhappy youth to the Swan Inn, which still stands just by the famous Twickenham Ferry. Mr. Clarke, a local surgeon, was soon on the spot, and the Baron also now reappeared.

He had probably at first intended to abscond, but had changed his mind in the hope that his son might not disclose the real facts of the case. He gave the same false account of the accident to the doctor, and pretended to be very concerned about his son's condition. The doctor, however, from the appearance of the wounds and their position, soon realized that the Baron was lying; moreover, the looks of fear with which the frightened youth watched each of his father's movements, were clear indications of what had really occurred.

During a brief absence of the Baron from the room, the young man hurriedly informed the doctor of the true state of the case. He pointed out that the Baron would gain £30,000 by his death. This would only have happened if the son died unmarried and intestate. He had apparently no intention of marrying; but he had spoken of leaving his money to an aunt and some cousins. He implored the surgeon not to leave him alone with his father.

There were two very severe wounds, the one on the forehead and the other on the side of the head, and he had lost a great deal of blood. The doctor, seeing the gravity of the situation, sent one of his assistants to bear the Baron and his son company on their return journey to London; nor did he leave the young man till he had been taken from his rooms in Duke Street, Westminster, to his uncle's house, where he would be safe from his father's malice. The Baron had meanwhile fled to Paris; but after a short stay there he returned, accompanied by two French policemen, to take his trial in England.

The attempt on the part of a Baron to murder his own son in broad daylight, had excited London Society not a little; and on 24th August the Central Criminal Court was packed with eager listeners. At one time it had been feared that the Baron might escape punishment, since the son obstinately refused to give evidence. He had, indeed, signed a deposition shortly after the occurrence, in which he gave an account of the whole matter;

but he now declined to be a party to his father's prosecution. Some have stated that he feared some awkward disclosures concerning himself, others that he was still too fearful to dare to appear as a witness against his father; others that his relations desired him to refrain from convicting his father of a serious crime. Certain it is that with all the proverbial obstinacy of a weak nature he declined to give evidence, even though he was threatened with imprisonment for his contumacy.

It chanced, however, that a conviction could be secured without him; for an old labourer had seen the whole occurrence from a distance of about 100 yards. He had been returning home from work, when he saw the elder man rise in his stirrups and strike the cruel blows with something white that sparkled in the sun—evidently the silver knob of the Baron's riding whip. Strangely enough he had died in the interval between 28th June and 24th August; but he had made his deposition concerning the assault before his death. There was, of course, too, plenty of corroborative evidence from the man and woman of the lane, the doctor, and the people at the inn. The jury, with more leniency than common sense, found the Baron guilty only of unlawfully wounding his son, instead of attempting to murder him, and he was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment with hard labour. Truly offences against the person are lightly punished as compared with those committed against property—apparently English juries and magistrates value their pockets more than their lives and limbs. Perhaps that is why Napoleon called us a nation of shopkeepers.

This dastardly attempt to murder has been included because it illustrates very well the contention of the first chapter of this work that crime is not primarily due to heredity, or to environment, or to madness or abnormality, but to a bad heart and a perverted will. This Baron had enjoyed a good education, cultured surroundings, and good birth; but all these could not

save him from an egotism so intense that he did not shrink from sacrificing his only son when he stood between him and the gratification of his wishes. Therefore, in all attempts to eradicate crime it must be remembered that Religion is just as necessary as Science or Social Reform.

CHAPTER XI

MURDER IN FICTION

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MARLOWE has given the world two plays full of terror in the Jew of Malta, and Edward II; but the first is rendered ridiculous by its accumulation of horrors, and the second, though a fine tragedy, lacks the genius of his great contemporary Shakespeare, who traversed the gamut of all human emotions, and exhibits many passages that excite feelings of terror and pity. As, for instance, the scene where Arthur pleads with Hubert for his eyes, or where Clarence pleads with the two murderers for his life; but nothing is grander or more terrible than the murder of King Duncan in Macbeth. Titus Andronicus, like the Jew of Malta, is too crude in its development, and too loathsome in its incidents, so that disgust is excited rather than terror.

Shakespeare and Goethe are moderns who can rank even with the great Greek tragedians; "Macbeth" and "Hamlet" can challenge comparison with "Antigone" or "Iphigeneia". The murder of King Duncan, the psychology of his murderers, and the Nemesis that overtakes them, are depicted with a genius that can never be surpassed. In Macbeth, Shakespeare makes a skilful use of the supernatural, and an uncanny atmosphere is introduced at the commencement of the play by the incantation of the witches, and their strange prediction which harmonizes only too well with the innate ambition of Macbeth. Circumstances favour his design, since the Scotch King comes as a guest to Macbeth's castle. Still Macbeth is, in his wife's opinion, too full of the milk of human kindness; he would like to win without the disagreeable necessity of playing false: he would like the

crown without shedding Duncan's blood. His more sluggish temperament needs the incitement of his ruthless wife.

Lady Macbeth is, throughout, the guiding spirit of the enterprise; Macbeth executes the deed, but it is she who urges him to action, and who braces his nerves after the deed has been done. There is a singular parallel between these two characters and those of Ahab and Jezebel in the Bible. When Ahab is distressed because Naboth refuses to part with his vineyard, it is his queen who inquires with scorn: "Dost thou now govern the Kingdom of Israel?" Just so Lady Macbeth addresses her husband:

> "Wouldst thou have that
> Which thou esteem'st an ornament of life,
> And live a coward in thine own esteem
> Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would'
> Like the poor cat i' the adage?"

And again:

Macb. If we should fail?
Lady M. We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking place,
And we'll not fail.

She then sketches out the method of the murder and shows how suspicion can be thrown upon the two chamber guards. When the deed has been done Shakespeare heightens the terror of the scene by a skilful use of noises—first, the bell that gives the fateful signal; then the hooting of the owl; and lastly the continued knocking which so perturbs Macbeth. This ominous knocking is, of course, much more powerful when acted than when read; for the audience is made to partake in the horror of the situation.

Macb. . . . Whiles I threat, he lives;
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.
A bell rings.

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell. [*Exit.*

Lady M. That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold:
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.—Hark!—Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open; and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores; I have drugg'd their possets,
That death, and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

Macb. [*Within*]. Who's there?—what, ho!

Lady M. Alack! I am afraid they have awak'd,
And 'tis not done:—the attempt, and not the deed,
Confounds us.—Hark!—I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em.—Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.—My husband!

Re-enter MACBETH.

Macb. I have done the deed.—Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady M. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

Macb. When?

Lady M. Now.

Macb. As I descended?

Lady M. Ay.

Macb. Hark!—
Who lies i' the second chamber?

Lady M. Donalbain.

Macb. This is a sorry sight.

[*Looking on his hands.*

Lady M. A foolish thought to say a sorry sight.

Macb. There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried *Murder*!
That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and address'd them
Again to sleep.

Lady M. There are two lodg'd together.

Macb. One cried, *God bless us*! and, *Amen*, the other;
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands

Listening their fear, I could not say, *Amen*,
When they did say, *God bless us*.
Lady M. Consider it not so deeply.
Macb. But wherefore could not I pronounce, *Amen*?
I had most need of blessing, and *Amen*
Stuck in my throat.
Lady M. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.
Macb. Methought I heard a voice cry, *Sleep no more*!
Macbeth does murder sleep,—the innocent sleep;
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast.
Lady M. What do you mean?
Macb. Still it cried, *Sleep no more*! to all the house;
Glamis hath murder'd sleep; and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more,—Macbeth shall sleep no more!
Lady M. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength to think
So brainsickly of things.—Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.—
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there; go carry them; and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.
Macb. I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not.
Lady M. Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers; the sleeping of the dead
Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.
[*Exit. Knocking within.*
Macb. Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?

Later in the play, as suspicion begins to point more and more in their direction, Lady Macbeth's nerves at length

give way; for like most women she was more capable of meeting a sudden emergency than of bearing a continuous strain. She suffers from somnambulism, during which she betrays the tortured working of her guilty conscience.

Doctor: How came she by that light?

Gentlewoman: Why, it stood by her; she has light by her continually, 'tis her command.

Doct. You see, her eyes are open.

Gent. Ay, but their sense is shut.

Doct. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gent. It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady M. Yet here's a spot.

Doct. Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady M. Out, damned spot! out, I say!—
One; two; why, then 'tis time to do't:—Hell is murky!—Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it when none can call our power to account?—Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Doct. Do you mark that?

Lady M. The Thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean?—No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

Doct. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

Gent. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

Lady M. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

Doct. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gent. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doct. Well, well, well,—

Gent. Pray God it be, sir.

Doct. This disease is beyond my practice; yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady M. Wash you hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale:—I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

Doct. Even so?

Lady M. To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate; come, come, come, come, give me your hand; what's done cannot be undone; to bed, to bed, to bed.

SCOTT

Deeds of violence and bloodshed, even when performed for private ends, do not shock us so much when they occur in historical romances of the distant past, as when they form part of the narrative of a modern novel. The employment of a lance or a cutlass, and the use of a certain form of archaic language, seems to rob these matters of more than half their horror. So the duels and murders in the novels of Dumas and Scott do not seem so terrible as those in Dickens or Dostoieffsky. There are, however, certain passages in the Waverley Novels which inspire terror, such as the threatened torture of Isaac in "Ivanhoe", the murder of Trapbois in the "Fortunes of Nigel", and the fierce fight of the rival clans in the "Fair Maid of Perth". The following selection has been chosen because it gives such a magnificent illustration of those feelings of fear and horror which form the very essence of tragedy.

In this fine story, the young Highland chieftain, Conachar, is cursed by constitutional timidity, and, most unfortunately for him, he rouses the animosity of Henry Smith, a man of gigantic strength and courage—a fellow who loved fighting for its own sake. He gains un unexpected opportunity of gratifying his desire to kill Conachar in a dreadful fight between the chosen representatives of two Highland tribes. Thirty picked men are carefully selected from each clan, and it is arranged that their age-long feud shall be decided by a contest to be fought before the King at Perth.

The fateful Palm Sunday arrived, and it was discovered that the Clan Chattan numbered only twenty-nine in lieu of its proper quota of thirty. A volunteer was asked for, and the magnificent sum of five shillings was offered as an incentive to join in the fray. Harry Smith, seeing the person of his hated enemy amid the Clan Quhele, of which, indeed, he was chief, accepted the offer in order to have an opportunity of killing Conachar. Though Scott shows some sympathetic understanding of Conachar's infirmity, he does not seem to hold as reprehensible the ferocity of his huge hero Harry of the Wynd. Torquil, the heroic foster-father of the young chief, cannot understand that Conachar is really timid, and attributes his lack of valour to witch-craft.

> Harry Smith was easily distinguished by his Lowland habit, as well as his remaining on the spot where they had first encountered, where he stood leaning on a sword beside a corpse whose bonneted head, carried to ten yards' distance from the body by the force of the blow which had swept it off, exhibited the oak-leaf, the appropriate ornament of the body-guard of Eachin MacIan. Since he slew his man, Henry had not struck a blow, but had contented himself with warding off many that were dealt at himself, and some which were aimed at the Chief. MacGillie Chattanach became alarmed, when, having given the signal that his men should again draw together, he observed that his powerful recruit remained at a distance from the ranks, and showed little disposition to join them.
>
> "What ails thee, man?" said the Chief. "Can so strong a body have a mean and cowardly spirit? Come and make in to the combat."
>
> "You as good as called me hireling but now," replied Henry. . . . "If I am such," pointing to the headless corpse, "I have done enough for my day's wage."
>
> "He that serves me without counting his hours," replied the Chief, "I reward him without reckoning wages."
>
> "Then," said Smith, "I fight as a volunteer, and in the post which best likes me."

"All this is at your own discretion," replied MacGillie Chattanach, who saw the prudence of humouring an auxiliary of such promise.

"It is enough," said Henry; and shouldering his heavy weapon, he joined the rest of the combatants with alacrity and placed himself opposite to the Chief of the Clan Quhele.

It was then, for the first time, that Eachin showed some uncertainty. He had long looked up to Henry as the best combatant which Perth and its neighbourhood could bring into the lists. His hatred to him as a rival was mingled with recollection of the ease with which he had once, though unarmed, foiled his own sudden and desperate attack; and when he beheld him with his eyes fixed in his direction, the dripping sword in his hand, and obviously meditating an attack on him individually, his courage fell, and he gave symptoms of wavering, which did not escape his foster-father.

It was lucky for Eachin that Torquil was incapable, from the formation of his own temper, and that of those with whom he had lived, to conceive the idea of one of his own tribe, much less of his Chief and foster-son, being deficient in animal courage. Could he have imagined this, his grief and rage might have driven him to the fierce extremity of taking Eachin's life, to save him from staining his honour. But his mind rejected the idea that his Dault was a persona coward, as something which was monstrous and unnatural. . . .

They fought and struggled on, however, and as their strength decayed, their fury seemed to increase. Henry Wynd now wounded in many places, was still bent on breaking through or exterminating the band of bold hearts who continued to fight around the object of his animosity. But still the father's shout of "Another for Hector!" was cheerfully answered by the fatal countersign, "Death for Hector!" and although the Clan Quhele were now outnumbered, the combat seemed still dubious. It was bodily lassitude alone that again compelled them to another pause. . . .

The Clan Chattan were then observed to be twelve in number, but two or three were scarce able to stand without leaning on their swords. Five were left of the Clan Quhele; Torquil and his youngest son were of the number, both slightly

> wounded. Eachin alone had, from the vigilance used to intercept all blows levelled against his person, escaped without injury. The rage of both parties had sunk, through exhaustion, into sullen desperation. They walked staggering, as if in their sleep, through the carcasses of the slain, and gazed on them, as if again to animate their hatred towards their surviving enemies, by viewing the friends they had lost.

Torquil having sacrificed all his eight sons to save his darling chief at length goes out himself to meet the ferocious Smith, whilst Conachar is changing his armour.

> Meanwhile Eachin, finding himself alone, after a disorderly and vain attempt to put on his foster-brother's harness, became animated by an emotion of shame and despair, and hurried forward to support his foster-father in the terrible struggle, ere some other of the Clan Chattan should come up. When he was within five yards, and sternly determined to take his share in the death-fight, his foster-father fell, cleft from the collar-bone well-nigh to the heart, and murmuring with his last breath, "*Bas air son Eachin*!—The unfortunate youth saw the fall of his last friend, and at the same moment beheld the deadly enemy, who had hunted him through the whole field, standing within sword's point of him, and brandishing the huge weapon which had hewed its way to his life through so many obstacles. Perhaps this was enough to bring his constitutional timidity to its highest point; or perhaps he recollected, at the same moment, that he was without defensive armour, and that a line of enemies, halting indeed and crippled, but eager for revenge and blood, were closely approaching. It is enough to say, that his heart sickened, his eyes darkened, his ears tingled, his brain turned giddy—all other considerations were lost in the apprehension of instant death; and, drawing one ineffectual blow at Smith, he avoided that which was aimed at him in return, by bounding backward; and ere the former could recover his weapon, Eachin had plunged into the stream of the Tay.

VICTOR HUGO

Among English writers no sane critic would hesitate a moment in assigning the primacy to Shakespeare; he may be doubtful as to who should come second, but he is quite certain that Shakespeare should come first. In like manner the German at once decides for Goethe; Italians acclaim Dante as the crown of Italian literature; but the French are by no means agreed as to their choice. In dramatic literature there is Molière; as a dramatist and writer of essays there is Voltaire; as a poet there is Racine; but as a master of romance, there is not one that can surpass Victor Hugo; he is the prince of all the French novelists.

Of all his novels, "Notre Dame" is undoubtedly the best; in fact it is one of the best novels ever written in any language; less diffuse than Les Misérables, the story revolves round five characters only—The Priest Frollo, the queer hunch back Quasimodo, the gay, careless, intensely selfish Captain Phoebus, the tame, spiritless, practical Gringoire, and the charming, child-like, beautiful Esmeralda, the most pathetic heroine in all literature. Married to an incapable husband, passionately loved by a faithless priest, adored by a hideous hunchback, and herself romantically in love with a dissolute officer, she is like a weather-cock, blown this way and that by conflicting winds, and is ever the sport of time and circumstance, without means or power to direct her own course.

Esmeralda is so lovable, because she is so artless, so affectionate, and so natural; even her offering herself to Phoebus is robbed of immodesty by her child-like ingenuousness; whilst her lamb-like patience in the presence of her cruel persecutors exalts her—gipsy though she was—to the level of the ancient Christian martyrs. Delivered over to punishment for witchcraft by the baffled lust of Frollo, she is being put to death on the great square in front of Notre Dame, whilst Frollo and Quasimodo watch her execution with very different feelings from the top of the cathedral.

At length the hunchback, infuriated at the diabolical laugh of the priest, pushes him over to meet his well-deserved and terrible end.

> At the moment when it looked the most horrible, a demoniacal laugh—a laugh such as can come only from one who is no longer human—burst from the livid visage of the priest. Quasimodo did not hear that laugh, but he saw it. The ringer made a few steps backward from behind the archdeacon, and then rushing furiously upon him, thrusting both his large hands against his back, he pushed Dom Claude over into the abyss toward which he had been leaning.
>
> The priest cried out "Damnation!" and fell.
>
> The gutter-head over which he had been leaning, arrested his fall. He clung to it with desperate grip; but, at the moment that he was opening his lips to cry out again, he saw passing along the verge of the balustrade above him the formidable and avenging countenance of Quasimodo, and was silent. Beneath him was the abyss—a fall of full two hundred feet—and the pavement. In this dreadful situation the archdeacon said not a word, breathed not a groan. Only he writhed upon the gutter, making incredible efforts to re-ascend; but his hands had no hold of the granite, his feet constantly slid away upon the blackened wall. They who have ascended to the top of the towers of Notre Dame know that the stone-work swells out immediately below the balustrade. It was on the re-entering angle of this ridge that the miserable archdeacon was exhausting his efforts. It was not with a wall merely perpendicular that he was striving, but with a wall that sloped away from under him.
>
> Quasimodo would only have had to stretch out his hand to him to draw him from the gulf, but he did not so much as look at him. He was looking on the Grève—he was looking on the gibbet—he was looking on the gipsy girl. The poor deaf creature had leaned his elbows on the balustrade in the very place where the archdeacon had been the moment before, and there, keeping his eye fixed upon the only object of which at that moment he was conscious, he was mute and motionless as one struck by the thunderbolt—except that a long stream

of tears was flowing from that eye which until then had never shed but one.

Meanwhile the archdeacon was panting; his bald forehead was streaming with perspiration; his nails were bleeding against the stones; he was grazing his knees against the wall. He could hear his cassock, which had caught hold of the gutter, tearing more and more at each jerk that he gave it; and to complete his misfortune, the gutter itself terminated in a leaden pipe, which he could feel slowly bending under the weight of his body. The wretched man was saying to himself, that when his hands should be worn out with fatigue —when his cassock should be rent asunder—when that lead should be completely bent—he must of necessity fall—and terror froze his vitals. Now and then he looked down bewilderingly upon a sort of small table formed some ten feet lower by projections of sculpture; and he implored Heaven from the bottom of his agonizing soul, that he might be permitted to spend the remainder of his life upon that narrow space of two feet square, though it were to last a hundred years. Once he ventured to look down into the Place below him, but when he turned his head upward again, it was with closing eyes and hair erect.

There was something frightful in the silence of these two men. While the archdeacon was agonizing in that horrible manner but a few feet from him, Quasimodo was weeping and looking upon the Grève.

The archdeacon, finding that all his efforts to raise himself served only to warp the one feeble point of support that remained to him, had at length resolved to remain quite still. There he was—clasping the gutter—scarce drawing his breath—stirring not at all—without any other motion than that mechanical convulsion of the viscera which is felt in a dream when we fancy we are falling. His fixed eyes were wide open with a stare of pain and astonishment. Meanwhile he felt himself going by degrees; his fingers slipped upon the gutter; he felt more and more the weakness of his arms and the weight of his body; the bending piece of lead that supported him inclined more and more downward. He saw beneath him, frightful to look upon, the sharp roof of the church of Saint-Jean-de-Rond, small as a card bent double.

He looked, one after another, at the imperturbable sculptures of the tower—like him suspended over the precipice—but without terror for themselves or pity for him. All around him was of stone—before his eyes, the gaping monsters; in the Place below, the pavement; over his head, Quasimodo weeping.

Down in the Parvis there were some groups of worthy starers, quietly striving to guess what madman it could be that was amusing himself after so strange a fashion. The priest could hear them saying—for their voices mounted up to him clear and shrill—"Why, he'll surely break his neck."

Quasimodo was weeping.

At length the archdeacon, foaming with rage and dread, felt that all was unavailing. However, he gathered what strength he had remaining for one last effort. He drew himself up on the gutter, sprung from against the wall with both his knees, hung his hands in a cleft of the stonework, and succeeded, perhaps, in climbing up with one foot; but the force which he was obliged to use gave a sudden bend to the leaden beak that supported him; and the same effort rent his cassock asunder. Then finding everything under him give way—having only his benumbed and powerless hands by which to cling to anything—the unhappy man closed his eyes, left hold of the gutter and fell.

Quasimodo looked at him falling.

A fall from such a height is seldom perpendicular. The archdeacon, launched through the void, fell at first with his head downward and his arms extended—then he turned round several times. The wind carried him against the top of one of the houses, upon which the miserable man was first dashed. However, he was not dead when he reached it. The ringer could perceive him still make an effort to cling to the gable with his hands, but the slope was too quick, and he had no strength left. He glided rapidly down the roof, like a loosened tile, then dashed upon the pavement, and there he lay quite still.

DE QUINCEY

Opium exercises a very distinct effect upon its votaries, and its strange effect is especially remarkable in writers who

have been addicted to the use of this drug. A similarity in certain points is manifest in the writings of De Quincey, Coleridge, and Edgar Allan Poe, who were all victims to this vice. There is in all three a vividness of imagination carried to excess, a subtlety of thought which is meticulous in a strange wire-drawn logic, a discursiveness which is sometimes tedious, and a visionary dreamland which oscillates between the beautiful, the grotesque, and the horrible.

De Quincey possesses the talent of Defoe in making fiction bear the semblance of reality; but the exactitude of his English is not always in proportion to the accuracy of his facts. His "Autobiography" and his "Confessions" are not always correct in their facts, though inimitable in their psychology. The following account of the terrible atrocities committed by John Williams in 1812, are included under the heading of fiction; because the vivid imagination of the great essayist has slightly embellished the events, though in the main the murders are correctly described. The feelings of the various actors in these tragedies are wonderfully well described; for De Quincey, owing to the extraordinary vividness of his imagination, could, like Dickens, project himself into the minds of his characters. For the sake of brevity, the thrilling account of the extermination of the Marr family is omitted, and only a few extracts are given describing the murder of the Williamsons. These atrocities, occurring within twelve days of each other, excited universal interest, and Southey considered that they rose to the dignity of a national event.

Ratcliff Highway, the scene of these horrors, is described by De Quincey as a chaotic quarter of eastern or nautical London, where lascars, Chinese, Moors, and negroes were to be met at every corner. Williams is described as a man of about five feet eight inches, rather thin, but wiry and muscular. A seaman, who had been much in India, his most striking peculiarity was the ghastly pallor of his face, and the curious glaze over his

eyes. His expression was cruel and tigerish, but he had sufficient cunning to be able to insinuate himself into the good graces of young women. This horrible monster, who was instigated in this case partly by a desire for plunder, partly by a wolfish craving for blood, had already dispatched Mr. and Mrs. Williamson and their servant when the journeyman assistant, having been awakened by the noise, crept downstairs to see what was the matter.

> It was no effect of prudence, merely the fascination of killing fear it was, that drove him to open the door. One step brought him to the head of the stairs; he lowered his head over the balustrade to listen; and at that moment ascended from the little parlour, this agonizing cry from the woman servant, "Lord Jesus Christ! we shall all be murdered!" What a Medusa's head must have lurked in those dreadful bloodless features, and those glazed rigid eyes, that seemed rightfully belonging to a corpse, when one glance of them sufficed to proclaim a death-warrant.
>
> Three separate death-struggles were by this time over; and the poor petrified journeyman, quite unconscious of what he was doing, in blind, passive, self-surrender to panic, absolutely descended both flights of stairs. Infinite terror inspired him with the same impulse as might have been inspired by headlong courage. In his shirt, and upon old decaying stairs, that at times creaked under his feet, he continued to descend, until he had reached the lowest step but four. The situation was tremendous beyond any that is on record. A sneeze, a cough, almost a breathing, and the young man would be a corpse, without a chance or a struggle for his life. The murderer was at that time in the little parlour—the door of which parlour faced you in descending the stairs; and this door stood ajar; indeed, much more considerably open than what is understood by the term "ajar". Of that quadrant, or 90 degrees, which the door would describe in swinging so far open as to stand at right-angles to the lobby, or to itself, in a closed position, 55 degrees at the least were exposed. Consequently, two out

> of three corpses were exposed to the young man's gaze. Where was the third? And the murderer—where was he? As to the murderer, he was walking rapidly backwards and forwards in the parlour, audible but not visible at first, being engaged with something or other in that part of the room which the door still concealed. What the something might be the sound soon explained; he was applying keys tentatively to a cupboard, a closet, and a escritoire, in the hidden part of the room. Very soon, however, he came into view; but fortunately for the young man, at this critical moment the murderer's purpose too entirely absorbed him to allow of his throwing a glance to the staircase, on which else the white figure of the journeyman, standing in motionless horror, would have been detected in one instant, and seasoned for the grave in the second.

In abject terror the journeyman stole back up the stairs to his bedroom.

> His plan was now formed; on regaining his bedroom, he placed the bed against the door by way of a transient retardation to the enemy, that might give him a short warning, and in the worst extremity, might give him a chance for life by means of a desperate leap. This change made as quietly as was possible, he tore the sheets, pillow-cases, and blankets into broad ribbons; and after plaiting them into ropes, spliced the different lengths together. . . . All this has been accomplished in about six minutes; and the hot contest between above and below is still steadily but fervently proceeding. Murderer is working hard in the parlour; journeyman is working hard in the bedroom. Miscreant is getting on famously downstairs; one batch of bank-notes he has already bagged; and is hard upon the scent of a second. He has also sprung a covey of golden coins. Sovereigns as yet were not; but guineas at this period fetched thirty shillings apiece; and he has worked his way into a little quarry of these. Murderer is almost joyous; and if any creature is still living in this house, as shrewdly he suspects, and very soon means to know, with that creature he would be happy, before cutting the creature's throat, to drink a glass of something.

In addition to the journeyman's desire to save himself he was also anxious, if possible, to save the child that slept upstairs and had as yet escaped from the murderous clutches of the assassin. Unlike the pawnbroker, who when roused by the maid in the occurrence of the Marr murders, had gone in boldly to confront the murderer armed only with a poker, this journeyman had no idea of resisting the assassin but thought only of flight.

> Meantime, if the murderer allows himself to loiter, the rope-maker overhead does not. Well he knows that the poor child's fate is on the edge of a razor; for all turns upon the alarm being raised before the murderer reaches her bedside. And at this very moment, whilst desperate agitation is nearly paralysing his fingers, he hears the sullen stealthy step of the murderer creeping up through the darkness. It had been the expectation of the journeyman (founded on the clamorous uproar with which the street door was slammed) that Williams when disposable for his upstairs work, would come racing at a long jubilant gallop, and with a tiger roar; and perhaps, on his natural instincts, he would have done so. But this mode of approach, which was of dreadful effect when applied to a case of surprise, became dangerous in the case of people who might by this time have been placed fully upon their guard. The step which he had heard was on the staircase—but upon which stair? He fancied upon the lowest; and in a movement so slow and cautious, even this might make all the difference; yet might it not have been the tenth, twelfth, or fourteenth stair? Never, perhaps, in this world did any man feel his own responsibility so cruelly loaded and strained, as at this moment did the poor journeyman on behalf of the slumbering child. Lose but two seconds, through awkwardness or through the self-counteractions of panic, and for her the total difference arose between life and death. Still there is a hope; and nothing can so frightfully expound the hellish nature of him whose baleful shadow, to speak astrologically, at this moment darkens the house of life, than the simple expression of the ground on which this hope rested. The journeyman felt sure that the murderer would not be satisfied to kill the poor child whilst unconscious. This would be to

> defeat his whole purpose in murdering her at all. To an epicure in murder, such as Williams, it would be taking away the very sting of the enjoyment, if the poor child should be suffered to drink off the bitter cup of death without fully apprehending the misery of the situation.

Fortunately, he escaped, and assistance arrived in time to save the child, though not to apprehend the murderer who effected his escape by jumping out of windows and becoming lost in the fog.

> The danger was, that the rope should run too smoothly through his hands, and that by too rapid an acceleration of pace he should come violently to the ground. Happily he was able to resist the descending impetus: the knots of the splicings furnished a succession of retardations. But the rope proved shorter by four or five feet than he had calculated; ten or eleven feet from the ground he hung suspended in the air; speechless for the present, through long-continued agitation; and not daring to drop boldly on the rough carriage pavement lest he should fracture his legs. But the night was not dark, as it had been on the occasion of the Marr murders. And yet, for purposes of criminal police, it was by accident worse than the darkest night that ever hid a murder or baffled a pursuit. London, from east to west, was covered with a deep pall (rising from the river) of universal fog. Hence it happened, that for twenty or thirty seconds the young man hanging in the air was not observed. His white shirt at length attracted notice. Three or four people ran up and received him in their arms, all anticipating some dreadful annunciation. To what house did he belong? Even that was not instantly apparent; but he pointed with his finger to Williamson's door, and said in a half-choking whisper—"Marr's murderer, now at work!"

Williams was arrested the next day at a seaman's lodging-house; his detection was chiefly due to his leaving the large hammer with which he had committed the first murders at the Marr's house. This hammer had on it the initials J P.; and

Williams's fellow lodgers recognized it in the official notice that had been published as the property of John Petersen, a ship's carpenter, who formed one of their company. Williams evaded execution by suicide, and was buried at four cross roads according to the custom of those times.

Another extract, on the McKean murder, gives a further illustration of De Quincey's extraordinary power. Two young men named McKean unfortunately became aware that a large amount of benefit money belonging to a club was stored in a small inn near Manchester.

> They were hawkers; and, until lately, had borne most respectable characters; but some mercantile crash had overtaken them with utter ruin, in which their joint capital had been swallowed up to the last shilling. This sudden prostration had made them desperate; their own little property had been swallowed up in a large social catastrophe, and society at large they looked upon as accountable to them for a robbery. In preying, therefore, upon society, they considered themselves as pursuing a wild natural justice of retaliation. The money aimed at did certainly assume the character of public money, being the product of many separate subscriptions. They forgot, however, that in the murderous acts, which too certainly they meditated as preliminaries to the robbery, they could plead no such imaginary social precedent. In dealing with a family that seemed almost helpless, if all went smoothly, they relied entirely upon their own bodily strength. They were stout young men, twenty-eight to thirty two years old; somewhat undersized as to height—but squarely built, deep-chested, broad-shouldered, and so beautifully formed as regarded the symmetry of their limbs and their articulations, that, after their execution, the bodies were privately exhibited by the surgeons of the Manchester Infirmary as objects of statuesque interest. On the other hand, the household which they proposed to attack consisted of the following four persons: 1, the landlord, a stoutish farmer—but *him* they intended to disable by a trick then newly introduced amongst robbers,

and termed hocussing, i.e., clandestinely drugging the liquor of the victim with laudanum; 2, the landlord's wife; 3, a young servant-woman; 4, a boy, twelve or fourteen years old.

The murder of the poor servant and the miraculous escape of the boy is thus described:

> Saying this, she presented him with the candle, which he in a moment placed upon the table; and, intercepting her retreat from the room, threw his arms around her neck with a gesture as if he meant to kiss her. This was evidently what she herself anticipated, and endeavoured to prevent. Her horror may be imagined when she felt the perfidious hand that clasped her neck armed with a razor, and violently cutting her throat. She was hardly able to utter one scream, before she sank powerless upon the floor. This dreadful spectacle was witnessed by the boy, who was not asleep, but had presence of mind enough instantly to close his eyes. The murderer advanced hastily to the bed, and anxiously examined the expression of the boy's features; satisfied he was not, and he then placed his hand upon the boy's heart in order to judge by its beatings whether he were agitated or not. This was a dreadful trial; and no doubt the counterfeit sleep would immediately have been detected, when suddenly a dreadful spectacle drew off the attention of the murderer. Solemnly, and in ghostly silence, uprose in her dying delirium the dying girl—she stood upright; she walked steadily for a moment or two, she bent her steps towards the door. The murderer turned away to pursue her, and at that moment, the boy feeling that his one solitary chance was to fly whilst this scene was in progress, bounded out of bed. On the landing at the head of the stairs was one murderer, at the foot of the stairs was the other; who could believe that the boy had shadow of a chance for escaping? And yet, in the most natural way, he surmounted all hindrances. In the boy's horror he laid his left hand on the balustrade, and took a flying leap over it, which landed him at the bottom of the stairs, without having touched a single stair. He had thus effectually passed one of the murderers; the other, it is true,

was still to be passed; and this would have been impossible but for a sudden accident. The landlady had been alarmed by the faint scream of the young woman; had hurried from her private room to the girl's assistance; but at the foot of the stairs had been interrupted by the younger brother, and was at this moment struggling with him. The confusion of this life-and-death conflict had allowed the boy to whirl past them. Luckily he took a turn into a kitchen, out of which was a back-door, fastened by a single bolt, that ran freely at a touch; and through this door he rushed into the open fields. But at this moment the elder brother was set free for pursuit by the death of the poor girl. There is no doubt that in her delirium the image moving through her thoughts was that of the club, which met once a week. She fancied it no doubt sitting; and to this room, for help and for safety, she staggered along; she entered it, and within the doorway once more she dropped down, and instantly expired. Her murderer, who had followed her closely, now saw himself set at liberty for the pursuit of the boy. At this critical moment all was at stake; unless the boy were caught the enterprise was ruined. He passed his brother, therefore, and the landlady without pausing, and rushed through the open door into the fields. By a single second, perhaps, he was too late. The boy was keenly aware that if he continued in sight he would have no chance of escaping from a powerful young man. He made, therefore, at once for a ditch, into which he tumbled headlong. Had the murderer ventured to make a leisurely examination of the nearest ditch, he would easily have found the boy—made so conspicuous by his white shirt.

No modern criminologist could surpass the graphic character of this narrative. The flight of the terror-struck boy, the vain pursuit and baffled rage of the murderers, is all made so wonderfully vivid. How very different from the crude medley of buffoonery, melodrama, revolvers, and darkness with which the American dramatist now debases our stage!

CHAPTER XII
MURDER IN FICTION—(*continued*)

CHAPTER XII

MURDER IN FICTION (*continued*)

GREAT writers may be divided into two classes; those who are great observers and delineators of character, and those who possess in a supreme degree the creative and imaginative faculty. The former class avoid the primitive passions of hatred, passion, and jealousy, and confine themselves more to the venial faults and petty meannesses of daily life. The latter are rich in dramatic episodes, and scenes of violence which are abhorrent to the quiet mentality of the former, who confine themselves to the normal. In the one school we may place Jane Austen, Molière, Balzac, George Eliot, Trollope, and Thackeray; in the other we find Shakespeare, Dickens, Hugo, Scott, and Dostoieffsky. It is, of course, among the latter that we shall find the best descriptions of murder. The great Thackeray knew his own limitations, and in "Vanity Fair" (probably the best novel that has ever been written) he confesses:

> "We do not claim to rank among the military novelist. Our place is with the non-combatants. When the decks are cleared for action we go below, and wait meekly."

He deliberately avoided the description of Waterloo, which would have so delighted Scott or Conan Doyle, and gave us instead the inimitable description of the cowardly flight of Jos Sedley from Brussels. Again, when he embarked upon "Catherine", a novel entirely alien to his genius, he found himself incapable

of describing the actual murder itself. Accordingly, when he reaches in the narrative the murder of Mr. Hayes by Catherine, he has recourse to the bald account of the tragedy in the Newgate Calendar. Thackeray, in fact, only wrote "Catherine" in order to show that crime was in no way interesting or sensational as portrayed by Dickens in "Oliver Twist", or by Bulwer Lytton in "Eugene Aram", but rather that is was dull, sordid, and uninteresting. But though Thackeray could sometimes improve upon Dickens in the delineation of character, as he does, for instance, when he tones down the vulgar Joey Bagstock into the more polished Major Pendennis, yet he lacked the imagination and the creative power of Dickens.

Dickens comes only next to Shakespeare in the imaginative faculty, and of all novelists he is the most dramatic. Critics have only too often given a one-sided view of this great novelist; for they have been so occupied with his humour as to forget his dramatic power. They have been so full of the "Pickwick Papers" as to do scant justice to "The Tale of Two Cities"; too occupied with Silas Wegg and Boffin to consider the duel between Wrayburn and Headstone.

Dickens, as one would have expected, deals with murder, and the *chef d'oeuvre* among all murders is that of Montagu Tigg by Jonas Chuzzlewit. The novel itself is an indictment of selfishness, a vice that characterizes all the Chuzzlewits, and is seen in its most repulsive form in the person of Jonas. Jonas is so avaricious that he endeavours to poison his own father; and, inasmuch as the old man actually dies from grief at the discovery of his son's heartlessness, he imagines that he has succeeded in his purpose. Later in the story he becomes a partner with Tigg in a swindling Insurance Company, which is much assisted in its nefarious schemes by a complacent rogue of a doctor named Jobling. Tigg has discovered Jonas's secret by means of a private detective named Nadgett, and uses his knowledge to force compliance with his wishes:

. . . "Chuzzlewit!" replied Montague, leaning forward with his arms upon his knees. "Strange things have been done, and are done every day; not only in our way, but in a variety of other ways; and no one suspects them. But ours, as you say, my good friend, is a strange way; and we strangely happen, sometimes, to come into the knowledge of very strange events."

He beckoned to Jonas to bring his chair nearer; and looking slightly round, as if to remind him of the presence of Nadgett, whispered in his ear.

From red to white; from white to red again; from red to yellow; then to a cold, dull, awful, sweat bedabbled blue. In that short whisper, all those changes fell upon the face of Jonas Chuzzlewit; and when at last he laid his hand upon the whisperer's mouth, appalled, lest any syllable of what he said should reach the ears of the third person present, it was as bloodless, and as heavy as the hand of death.

He drew his chair away and sat a spectacle of terror, misery, and rage. He was afraid to speak, or look, or move, or sit still. Abject, crouching, and miserable, he was a greater degradation to the form he bore, than if he had been a loathsome wound from head to heel. . . .

Jonas, to escape being blackmailed attempts flight; but he has to return. In an interview between the two swindlers Tigg unconsciously seals his own doom by falsely alleging that he alone is aware of Jonas's guilty secret. From that moment Chuzzlewit determines to destroy him. Resolved on the murder, but uncertain as to the method of its execution, his attention is arrested by the shining steel of the doctor's lancets exposed to view upon the table.

Jonas had opened one of the shining little instruments; and was scrutinizing it with a look as sharp and eager as its own bright edge.

"Good steel, doctor. Good steel. Eh?"

"Ye-es," replied the doctor, with the faltering modesty of ownership. "One might open a vein prétty dexterously with that, Mr. Chuzzlewit."

"It has opened a good many in its time, I suppose?" said Jonas, looking at it with a growing interest.

"Not a few, my dear sir, not a few. It has been engaged in a pretty good practice, I believe I may say," replied the doctor, coughing as if the matter-of-fact were so very dry and literal that he couldn't help it. "In a pretty good practice," repeated the doctor, putting another glass of wine to his lips.

"Now, could you cut a man's throat with such a thing as this?" demanded Jonas.

"Oh certainly, certainly, if you took him in the right place," returned the doctor. "It all depends upon that."

"Where you have your hand now, hey?" cried Jonas bending forward to look at it.

"Yes," said the doctor, "that's the jugular."

Jonas, in his vivacity, made a sudden sawing in the air, so close behind the doctor's jugular, that he turned quite red. Then Jonas (in the same strange spirit of vivacity) burst into a loud discordant laugh.

"No, no," said the doctor, shaking his head; "edge-tools, edge-tools; never play with 'em."

Then comes the magnificent description of the night drive from London to Salisbury in the storm. How Dickens loved to make Nature harmonize with the actions and feelings of his characters! Here the tempestuous night is in keeping with the wild and boisterous spirits of Jonas in the coach. In "Edwin Drood" the night of the murder is signalized by a great storm at Cloisterham. In "Nicholas Nickelby" Ralph's suicide is preceded by his walk home attended overhead by a dark and ominous cloud. Carker's flight and suicide is accompanied by the continual roar of passing trains. The assault on Pip has its horror intensified by the loneliness of the marshes; whilst the awful death struggle between Riderhood and Headstone is rendered more dramatic by the weird stillness and desolation of the environment of ice and snow.

. . . The lightning being very crooked and very dazzling may have presented or assisted a curious optical illusion.

which suddenly rose before the startled eyes of Montague in the carriage, and as rapidly disappeared. He thought he saw Jonas with his hand lifted, and the bottle clenched in it like a hammer, making as if he would aim a blow at his head. At the same time he observed (or so believed), an expression in his face: a combination of the unnatural excitement he had shown all day, with a wild hatred and fear: which might have rendered a wolf a less terrible companion.

He uttered an involuntary exclamation, and called to the driver who brought his horses to a stop with all speed.

It could hardly have been as he supposed, for although he had not taken his eyes off his companion, and had not seen him move, he sat reclining in his corner as before.

"What's the matter?" said Jonas. "Is that your general way of waking out of your sleep?"

"I could swear," returned the other, "that I have not closed my eyes!"

"When you have sworn it," said Jonas composedly, "we had better go on again, if you have only stopped for that." . . . He was certain that he had not been asleep; but his eyes might have deceived him; for, looking at Jonas now in any interval of darkness, he could represent his figure to himself in any attitude his state of mind suggested. On the other hand, he knew full well that Jonas had no reason to love him; and even taking the piece of pantomime which had so impressed his mind to be a real gesture, and not the working of his fancy, the most that could be said of it, was, that it was quite in keeping with the rest of his diabolical fun, and had the same impotent expression of truth in it. "If he could kill me with a wish," thought the swindler, "I should not live long."

Then comes the accident, and both passengers are thrown out of the coach. Jonas is the first to recover himself, and seeing the helpless condition of his partner he makes frantic efforts to cause the horses to trample upon him.

In an instant, as if his own faint body were suddenly animated by a demon, he ran to the horses' heads; and

pulling at their bridles with all his force, set them struggling and plunging with such mad violence as brought their hoofs at every effort nearer to the skull of the prostrate man; and must have led in half a minute to his brains being dashed out on the highway.

As he did this, he fought and contended with them like a man possessed: making them wilder by his cries.

"Whoop!" cried Jonas. "Whoop! again! another! A little more, a little more! Up, ye devils! Hillo!"

As he heard the driver who had arisen and was hurrying up, crying to him to desist, his violence increased.

"Hillo! Hillo!" cried Jonas.

"For God's sake!" cried the driver. "The gentleman—in the road—he'll be killed!"

The same shouts and the same struggles were his only answer. But the man darting in at the peril of his own life, saved Montague's by dragging him through the mire and the water out of the reach of present harm.

When we reach the crisis there comes the beautiful description of the wood, and Tigg's strange presentiment of danger as he enters it; in this description of the stillness of the wood Dickens unconsciously imitates Silas Wegg by dropping into poetry.

He tore out from a fence a thick, hard, knotted stake; and, sitting down beneath a hay-rick, spent some time in shaping it, in peeling off the bark, and fashioning its jagged head with his knife. . . . Montague was flushed with wine but not gay. His scheme had succeeded, but he showed no triumph. The effort of sustaining his difficult part before his late companion had fatigued him, perhaps, or it may be, that the evening whispered to his conscience, or it may be (as it has been) that a shadowy veil was dropping round him, closing out all thoughts but the presentiment and vague foreknowledge of impending doom.

If there be fluids, as we know there are, which, conscious of a coming wind, or rain, or frost, will shrink and strive to hide themselves in their glass arteries; may not that subtle liquor of the blood perceive by properties within itself, that hands are raised to waste and spill it; and in the veins of men run cold and dull as his did, in that hour?

So cold, although the air was warm; so dull, although the sky was bright; that he rose up shivering, from his seat, and hastily resumed his walk. He checked himself as hastily: undecided whether to pursue the footpath which was lonely and retired, or to go back by the road.

He took the footpath.

The glory of the departing sun was on his face. The music of the birds was in his ears. Sweet wild-flowers bloomed about him. Thatched roofs of poor men's homes were in the distance; and an old grey spire, surmounted by a Cross, rose up between him and the coming night.

He had never read the lesson which these things conveyed; he had ever mocked and turned away from it; but, before going down into a hollow place, he looked round, once, upon the evening prospect, sorrowfully. Then he went down, down, down, into the dell.

It brought him to the wood; a close, thick, shadowy wood, through which the path went winding on, dwindling away into a slender sheep-track. He paused before entering; for the stillness of this spot almost daunted him.

The last rays of the sun were shining in, aslant, making a path of golden light along the stems and branches in its range, which, even as he looked, began to die away, yielding gently to the twilight that came creeping on. It was so very quiet that the soft and stealthy moss about the trunks of some old trees, seemed to have grown out of the silence, and to be its proper offspring. Those other trees which were subdued by blasts of wind in winter time, had not quite tumbled down, but being caught by others, lay all bare and scathed across their leafy arms, as if unwilling to disturb the general repose by the crash of their fall. Vistas of silence opened everywhere, into the heart and innermost recesses of the wood; beginning with the likeness of an aisle, a cloister, or a ruin open to the sky; then tangling off into a deep green rustling mystery, through which gnarled trunks, and twisted boughs, and ivy-covered stems, and trembling leaves, and bark-stripped bodies of old trees stretched out at length, were faintly seen in beautiful confusion.

As the sunlight died away, and evening fell upon the wood, he entered it. Moving, here and there, a bramble or a drooping

bough which stretched across his path, he slowly disappeared. At intervals a narrow opening showed him passing on, or the sharp cracking of some tender branch denoted where he went; then, he was seen or heard no more.

Never more beheld by mortal eye or heard by mortal ear: one man excepted. That man, parting the leaves and branches on the other side, near where the path emerged again, came leaping out soon afterwards.

What had he left within the wood that he sprang out of it, as if it were a hell! The body of a murdered man. . . .

Then follows a wonderful analysis of the murderer's state of mind; and his fear that his cunningly devised alibi might fail him.

But he was thinking, at the moment, of the closed-up room; of the possibility of their knocking at the door on some special occasion; of their being alarmed at receiving no answer; of their bursting it open; of their finding the room empty; of their fastening the door into the court, and rendering it impossible for him to get into the house, without showing himself in the garb he wore; which would lead to rumour, rumour to detection, detection to death. At that instant, as if by some design and order of circumstance, the knocking had come.

It still continued; like a warning echo of the dread reality he had conjured up. As he could not sit and hear it, he paid for his beer and walked on again. And having slunk about, in places unknown to him, all day; and being out at night, in a lonely road, in an unusual dress, and in that wandering and unsettled frame of mind; he stopped more than once to look about him, hoping he might be in a dream.

Still he was not sorry. No. He had hated the man too much, and had been bent, too desperately and too long, on setting himself free. If the thing could have come over again, he would have done it again. His malignant and revengeful passions were not so easily laid. There was no more penitence or remorse within him now, than there had been while the deed was brewing.

> Dread and fear were upon him; and that to an extent he had never counted on, and could not manage in the least degree. He was so horribly afraid of that infernal room at home. . . .

Then his stealthy return in the early morning to his locked-up bedroom, his guilty dread of any sudden noise, his awful feeling of anxiety and suspense, and his hesitation at showing himself to the members of his household. In this last touch Dickens gives one of many proofs of the extraordinary power he possessed of projecting himself into the minds of abnormal persons. The author's love of the unexpected is shown here by the detection of the murderer by Nadgett, whom he least suspected. Just so was Uriah Heep foiled by the despised Micawber, and the French maid deceived by the unassuming wife of Bucket, who shares with Javert and Sherlock Holmes the premier position among the great detectives of fiction. Just so would Jasper have been exposed by Bazard, the eccentric clerk, who was, of course, disguised as Datchery. Just so was Ralph Nickelby foiled by Newman Noggs, and the French virago held up by the English governess. Dickens had the true instinct for melodrama, and he could not resist the temptation of allowing the comic man to defeat the scheming villain in true transpontine style.

> . . . The passage-way was empty when his murderer's face looked into it. He stole on, to the door, on tip-toe, as if he dreaded to disturb his own imaginary rest.
>
> He listened. Not a sound. As he turned the key with a trembling hand, and pushed the door softly open with his knee, a monstrous fear beset his mind,
>
> What if the murdered man was there before him!
>
> He cast a fearful glance all round. But there was nothing there.
>
> He went in, locked the door, drew the key through and through the dust and damp in the fire-place to sully it again, and hung it up as of old. He took off his disguise, tied it up in a bundle ready for carrying it away and sinking in the

river before night, and locked it up in a cupboard. These precautions taken, he undressed and went to bed.

The raging thirst, the fire that burnt within him as he lay beneath the clothes, the augmented horror of the room, when they shut it out from his view; the agony of listening, in which he paid enforced regard to every sound, and thought the most unlikely one the prelude to that knocking which should bring the news; the starts with which he left his couch, and looking in the glass, imagined that his deed was broadly written in his face, and lying down and burying himself once more beneath the blankets, heard his own heart beating "Murder, Murder, Murder", in the bed; what words can paint tremendous truths like these!

The morning advanced. There were footsteps in the house. He heard the blinds drawn up, and shutters opened; and now and then a stealthy tread outside his own door.

He tried to call out, more than once, but his mouth was dry as if it had been filled with sand. At last he sat up in his bed and cried—

"Who's there?"

It was his wife.

He asked what it was o'clock? Nine.

"Did—did no one knock at my door yesterday?" he faltered. "Something disturbed me; but unless you had knocked the door down you would have got no notice from me."

"No one," she replied. That was well. He had waited almost breathless for her answer. It was a relief to him if anything could be.

"Mr. Nadgett wanted to see you," she said, "but I told him you were tired and had requested not to be disturbed. He said it was of little consequence and went away. As I was opening my window to let in the cool air, I saw him passing through the street this morning, very early; but he hasn't been again."

Passing through the street that morning? Very early! Jonas trembled at the thought of having had a narrow chance of seeing him himself; even him, who had no object but to avoid people, and sneak on unobserved, and keep his own secrets; and who saw nothing.

He called to her to get his breakfast ready, and prepared to go up-stairs, attiring himself in the clothes he had taken off when he came into that room, which had been, ever since, outside the door. In his secret dread of meeting the household for the first time, after what he had done, he lingered at the door on slight pretexts that they might see him without looking in his face; and left it ajar while he dressed; and called out, to have the windows opened, and the pavement watered, that they might become accustomed to his voice. Even when he had put off the time, by one means or other, so that he had seen or spoken to them all, he could not muster courage for a long while to go in among them, but stood at his own door listening to the murmur of their distant conversation.

He could not stop there for ever, and so joined them. His last glance at the glass had seen a tell-tale face, but that might have been because of his anxious looking in it. He dared not look at them to see if they observed him, but he thought them very silent.

And whatsoever guard he kept upon himself, he could not help listening, and showing that he listened. Whether he attended to their talk, or tried to think of other things, or talked himself, or held his peace, or resolutely counted the dull tickings of a hoarse clock at his back, he always lapsed, as if a spell were on him, into eager listening. For he knew it must come—and his present punishment, and torture, and distraction, were, to listen for its coming.

Hush! . . .

What a masterpiece!

The Victorians counted among them several literary giants in spite of all the sneers of feeble modern critics; Hardy alone, alas! remains a living monument of glories that are past.

Dickens is rich in dramatic scenes of violence; the most powerful are the murder of poor Nancy by Bill Sikes, the torturing of Pip by Orlick, the vivid manuscript written by Dr. Manette in the Bastille, and the murder of Tulkinghorn in "Bleak House". The latter is the most interesting to those who

love the mysterious and the unexpected; because the reader is cleverly led to believe that Lady Dedlock is the guilty person, whereas the murder had, in reality, been committed by her French maid, who had been enraged at the contemptuous way in which the old lawyer had treated her.

But the most mysterious plot of all (as its name implies) is the "Mystery of Edwin Drood". No other unfinished novel has ever excited so much controversy; like the authorship of the "Junius Letters", the correct solution of this story has always attracted the attention of the curious. Rosa Bud, the charming little school girl, has no less than four lovers—her official fiancé, Edwin Drood, her secret lover, Jasper, her destined husband, Lieutenant Tartar, and her boy admirer, Neville Landless.

Jasper, the Cathedral precentor and music master, is madly infatuated with Rosa, and he determines to rid himself of her accepted suitor, his nephew Drood. He also decided to avail himself of the jealousy that Neville feels towards Edwin, by so fashioning events as to throw suspicion upon the young Eurasian. The story was never finished owing to the sudden death of the novelist when he had only completed about half of it. The points that remain to be solved are:—(1) Was Drood really murdered? (2) How was he murdered? (3) How would the murderer be detected? (4) Who was Datchery? (5) Who would Rosa and Helena marry?

If Dickens had not stated that the plot of this novel was to be entirely new and original, one might have agreed with those that believe Jasper failed to kill Edwin, though he thought that he had done so; and that the nephew re-appears as Datchery to expose his wicked uncle. This device had, however, been already employed by Dickens in a story entitled "Hunted Down", and it is therefore very improbable that he would so soon have repeated himself, especially after his promise about novelty.

The first question then must be answered in the affirmative.

As to the second, it is fairly obvious that Jasper must have waylaid Edwin in the dark shadow of the cathedral, and strangled him with the black silk scarf, as he was returning after midnight from Minor Canon Corner.

> Arriving thus under the arched entrance of his dwelling, he pauses for an instance in the shelter to pull off that great black scarf, and hang it in a loop upon his arm. For that brief time, his face is knitted and stern. But it immediately clears, as he resumes his singing, and his way.
>
> And so he goes up the postern stair.

The method of the disposal of the body is clearly indicated by his questions to Durdles concerning the effect of quicklime, and his fraudulent copy of the key which opened Mrs. Sapsea's tomb inside the crypt. As to the third question, his detection would be due, in true accordance with Greek irony, to his own diary. The corpse would be identified by means of the engagement ring. Jasper had removed and thrown into the weir his nephew's ordinary jewellery of which, as the local jeweller told Drood, he had a complete inventory. But he overlooked the ring which Drood had dropped back into his waitscoat pocket, when the engagement between Rosa and himself had been broken off—unknown, of course, to Jasper.

> And now Edwin Drood's right hand closed again upon the ring in its little case, and again was checked by the consideration: "It is certain, now, that I am to give it back to him; then why should I tell her of it?" That pretty sympathetic nature which could be so sorry for him in the blight of their childish hopes of happiness together, and could so quietly find itself alone in a new world to weave fresh wreaths of such flowers as it might prove to bear, the old world's flowers being withered, would be grieved by those sorrowful jewels; and to what purpose? Why should it be? They were but a sign of broken joys and baseless projects; in their very beauty they were (as unlikeliest of men had said) almost a cruel

> satire on the loves, hopes, plans, of humanity, which are able to forecast nothing, and are so much brittle dust. Let them be. He would restore them to her guardian when he came down; he in his turn would restore them to the cabinet from which he had unwillingly taken them; and there, like old letters, or old vows, or other records of old aspirations come to nothing, they would be disregarded, until, being valuable, they were sold into circulation again, to repeat their former round.
>
> Let them be, let them lie unspoken of, in his breast. However distinctly or indistinctly he entertained these thoughts, he arrived at the conclusion. Let them be. Among the mighty store of wonderful chains that are for ever forging, day and night, in the vast iron-works of time and circumstance, there was one chain forged in the moment of that small conclusion, riveted to the foundations of heaven and earth, and gifted with invincible force to hold and drag. . . .

Other evidence would be forthcoming from Deputy, the opium hag, Durdles and, of course, from Datchery, which would suffice to convict him and bring him to the condemned cell at Maidstone jail, which Dickens visited whilst writing his novel.

Many guesses have been made as to the identity of Datchery, who has been variously identified as Helena Landless, Neville Landless, Tartar, Drood, and Bazard. This last conjecture is the most likely. For one reason, because he is the only character whose absence can be easily explained; for the lawyer Grewgious remarks to Rosa that his clerk is "off duty altogether at present". Moreover, Grewgious suspects Jasper from the beginning, and would be likely to have his movements watched. Again, Bazard is a writer of rejected plays, and would delight in something dramatic and mysterious. It was doubtless he, the despised and eccentric clerk, who was destined to expose the wicked scheming Jasper.

The last question is very easily answered; for Rosa is as certainly intended to marry Tartar as Helena is marked out as the future wife of Mr. Crisparkle. It is this latter circumstance

which renders the identification of Datchery as Helena so very improbable; for the Minor Canon and the China Shepherdess (his mother) would have hardly cared for a young lady who in those strict Victorian days, masqueraded as a private detective in man's attire.

The contrast between Jasper of the cathedral, and the Jasper of the opium den, is very powerful, and the self-restraint his official position forces upon a naturally ungovernable temperament is very similar to the description given in "Our Mutual Friend" of the forced repression exercised by Bradley Headstone Both are obliged by their professional duties to suppress strong primitive passions, and both are wildly infatuated with a girl who does not reciprocate their affection.

The atmosphere of opium with which the story opens seems to envelop most of the characters with a cloud of mystery. The murderer visits this den in order to enjoy in anticipation the terror and supplications of his victim. Once the crime has been done Jasper in his debauch fails to obtain the same pleasure that he has formerly derived from his visions; for sordid reality impinged upon imagination. The old hag had learnt the secret of making him talk, and eager to gain some power over him she artfully stimulates the disclosure of his secret.

> . . . "I know all that. I was only thinking. Look here. Suppose you had something in your mind; something you were going to do."
>
> "Yes, deary; something I was going to do?"
>
> "But had not quite determined to do."
>
> "Yes, deary."
>
> "Might or might not do, you understand."
>
> "Yes." With the point of a needle she stirs the contents of the bowl.
>
> "Should you do it in your fancy, when you were lying here doing this?"
>
> She nods her head. "Over and over again."

"Just like me! I did it over and over again. I have done it hundreds of thousands of times in this room."

"It's to be hoped it was pleasant to do, deary."

"It was pleasant to do!"

He says this with a savage air, and a spring or start at her. Quite unmoved she retouches and replenishes the contents of the bowl with her little spatula. Seeing her intent upon the occupation, he sinks into his former attitude.

"It was a journey, a difficult and dangerous journey. That was the subject in my mind. A hazardous and perilous journey, over abysses where a slip would be destruction. Look down! look down! You see what lies at the bottom there?"

He has darted forward to say it, and to point at the ground, as though at some imaginary object far beneath. The woman looks at him, as his spasmodic face approaches close to hers, and not at his pointing. She seems to know what the influence of her perfect quietude would be; if so, she has not miscalculated it, for he subsides again.

"Well; I have told you I did it here hundreds of thousands of times. What do I say? I did it millions and billions of times. I did it so often, and through such vast expanses of time, that when it was really done, it seemed not worth the doing, it was done so soon."

"That's the journey you have been away upon," she quietly remarks.

He glares at her as he smokes; and then, his eyes becoming filmy, answers: "That's the journey."

Silence ensues. His eyes are sometimes closed and sometimes open. The woman sits beside him, very attentive to the pipe, which is all the while at his lips.

"I'll warrant," she observes, when he has been looking fixedly at her for some consecutive moments, with a singular appearance in his eyes of seeming to see her a long way off, instead of so near him: "I'll warrant you made the journey in a many ways, when you made it so often?"

"No, always in one way."

"Always in the same way?"

"Ay."

"In the way in which it was really made at last?"

"Ay."

"And always took the same pleasure in harping on it?"

"Ay."

For the time he appears unequal to any other reply than this lazy monosyllabic assent. Probably to assure herself that it is not the assent of a mere automaton she reverses the form of her next sentence.

"Did you never get tired of it, deary, and try to call up something else for a change?"

He struggles into a sitting posture, and retorts upon her: "What do you mean? What did I want? What did I come for?"

She gently lays him back again, and before returning him the instrument he has dropped, revives the fire in it with her own breath; then says to him coaxingly:

"Sure, sure, sure! Yes, yes, yes! Now I go along with you. You was too quick for me. I see now. You come o' purpose to take the journey. Why, I might have known it, through its standing by you so."

He answers first with a laugh, and then with a passionate setting of his teeth:

"Yes, I came on purpose. When I could not bear my life, I came to get the relief, and I got it. It WAS one! It WAS one!" This repetition with extraordinary vehemence, and the snarl of a wolf.

She observes him very cautiously, as though mentally feeling her way to her next remark. It is: "There was a fellow-traveller, deary."

"Ha, ha, ha!" He breaks into a ringing laugh or rather yell.

"To think," he cries, "how often fellow-traveller, and yet not know it! To think how many times he went the journey, and never saw the road!"

The woman kneels upon the floor, with her arms crossed on the coverlet of the bed, close by him, and her chin upon them. In this crouching attitude she watches him. The pipe is falling from his mouth. She puts it back, and laying her hand upon his chest, moves him slightly from side to side. Upon that he speaks, as if she had spoken.

"Yes! I always made the journey first, before the changes

of colours and the great landscapes and glittering processions began. They couldn't begin till it was off my mind. I had no room till then for anything else."

Once more he lapses into silence. Once more she lays her hand upon his chest, and moves him slightly to and fro, as a cat might stimulate a half-slain mouse. Once more he speaks, as if she had spoken.

"What? I told you so. When it comes to be real at last, it is so short that it seems unreal for the first time. Hark!"

"Yes, deary. I am listening."

"Time and place are both at hand."

He is on his feet speaking in a whisper, and as if in the dark.

"Time, place, and fellow-traveller," she suggests, adopting his tone, and holding him softly by the arm.

"How could the time be at hand unless the fellow-traveller was? Hush! The journey's made. It's over."

"So soon?"

"That's what I said to you. So soon. Wait a little. This is a vision. I shall sleep it off. It has been too short and easy. I must have a better vision than this; this is the poorest of all. No struggle, no consciousness of peril, no entreaty—and yet I never saw that before." With a start.

"Saw what, deary?"

"Look at it! Look what a poor, mean, miserable thing it is. That must be real. It's over."

He has accompanied this incoherence with some wild unmeaning gestures; but they trail off into the progressive, inaction of stupor, and he lies a log upon the bed.

DOSTOIEFFSKY

Dostoieffsky is the most dramatic of all Russian novelists, and "Crime and Punishment" is his most powerful story. In it he depicts the gradual degradation of the hero Raskolnikoff through poverty induced by dissipation, which ultimately ends in crime. By shallow sophistries he had pretended to convince himself that certain people have rights above the ordinary law, and that what would be wrong for most people is right

for certain chosen individuals. He wastes the hardly-earned economies of his widowed mother and devoted sister in riotous living, and neglects his pupils till he has no money left to complete his course of study at the University. He thereupon determines to murder an old woman who acts as a small usurer, and to seize her money and valuables. The actual murder is described as follows:—

> "What is it?" she asked once more, weighing it in her hand and looking straight at her visitor.
>
> "Cigarette-case, silver, look at it."
>
> "It doesn't feel as though it were in silver. Oh! what a dreadful knot!"
>
> She began to untie the packet and turned to the light (all the windows were closed in spite of the heat). Her back was turned towards Raskolnikoff, and for a few seconds she paid no further attention to him. He opened his coat, freed the hatchet from the loop, but did not yet take it from its hiding-place; he held it with his right-hand beneath the garment. His limbs were weak, each moment they grew more numbed and stiff. He feared his fingers would relax their hold of the hatchet. Then his head turned giddy.
>
> "What is this you bring me?" cried Alena Ivanovna, turning to him in a rage.
>
> There was not a moment to lose now. He pulled out the hatchet, raised it with both hands, and let it descend without force, almost mechanically, on the old woman's head. But directly he had struck the blow his strength returned. According to her usual habit, Alena Ivanovna was bareheaded. Her scanty grey locks, greasy with oil, were gathered in one thin plait, which was fixed to the back of her neck by means of a piece of horn comb. The hatchet struck her just on the sinciput, and this was partly owing to her small stature. She scarcely uttered a faint cry and collapsed at once all in a heap on the floor; yet she still had strength to raise her arms to her head while one of her hands continued to clutch the pledge. Then Raskolnikoff, whose arm had regained all its vigour, struck two fresh blows with the hatchet on the crown of the old woman's head. The blood spurted out in

streams and the body rolled heavily over. At that moment the young man drew back; so soon as he beheld his victim stretched on the floor he bent over her face; she was dead. The wide-open eyes seemed about to jump from their sockets, the convulsions of death had given a grimacing expression to the countenance.

The murderer laid his hatchet down and at once began to search the corpse, taking the greatest precaution not to get stained with the blood. . . .

Footsteps resounded in the other room. He stopped short, frozen with terror. But the noise having ceased, he was already imagining he had been mistaken, when suddenly he distantly heard a faint cry, or rather a kind of feeble interrupted moan. At the end of a minute or two, everything was again as silent as death. Raskolnikoff had seated himself on the floor beside the trunk and was waiting, scarcely daring to breathe; suddenly he bounded up, caught up the hatchet, and rushed from the bedroom. In the centre of the apartment, Elizabeth, a huge bundle in her hands, stood gazing in a terror-stricken way at her dead sister; white as a sheet, she did not seem to have the strength to call out. On the sudden appearance of the murderer, she began to quake in every limb, and nervous twitches passed over her face: she tried to raise her arm, to open her mouth, but she was unable to utter the least cry, and, slowly retreating, her gaze still riveted on Raskolnikoff, she sought refuge in a corner. The poor woman drew back in perfect silence, as though she had no breath left in her body. The young man rushed upon her, brandishing the hatchet; the wretched creature's lips assumed the doleful expression peculiar to quite young children when, beginning to feel frightened of something, they gaze fixedly at the object which has raised their alarm, and are on the point of crying out. Terror had so completely stupefied this unfortunate Elizabeth, that, though threatened by the hatchet, she did not even think of protecting her face by holding her hands before her head, with that mechanical gesture which the instinct of self-preservation prompts on such occasions. She scarcely raised her left arm and extended it slowly in the direction of the murderer, as though to keep him off. The hatchet penetrated her skull, laying it open

from the upper part of the forehead to the crown. Elizabeth fell down dead. No longer aware of what he did, Raskolnikoff took the bundle from his victim's hand, then dropped it and ran to the anteroom.

He was more and more terrified, especially after this second murder, entirely unpremeditated by him. He was in a hurry to be gone; had he then been in a state to see things more clearly, had he only been able to form an idea of the difficulties besetting his position, to see how desperate, how hideous, how absurd it was, to understand how many obstacles there still remained for him to surmount, perhaps even crimes to commit, to escape from this house and return home, he would most likely have withdrawn from the struggle, and have gone at once and given himself up to justice; it was not cowardice which would have prompted him to do so, but the horror of what he had done. This last impression became more and more powerful every minute. Nothing in the world could now have made him return to the trunk, nor even re-enter the room in which it lay.

But the most powerful part of the story is the terror and anxiety which seizes upon the young student after the commission of the crime, his hair-breadth escape from the moneylender's room, his examinations by the magistrate, and his gradual softening of heart from contact with the gentle Sonia who urges him to confess. We select a passage which contains one of his dialogues with the magistrate, one of those fat men who seem obtuse and jovial, but for that very reason are the more dangerous. In a former interview he had nearly betrayed himself in answering a question about the workmen; he was therefore doubly on his guard at their second interview, which was still quite informal. With consummate skill Petrovitch endeavours to put the student off his guard at one moment giving the interview a social character, appearing to put his questions in quite a haphazard and casual way, whilst at another he endeavours to gain his end by irritating and exasperating the young man into some unguarded statement.

"If such a course succeeds with an uncultured moujik, it is equally efficacious when it concerns an enlightened, intelligent, or even distinguished man. For the main thing, my dear friend, is to determine in what sense a man is developed. The man, I mean, is intelligent, but he has nerves which are over-strung. And as for bile—the bile you are forgetting, that plays no small part with similar folk! Believe me, here we have a very mine of information! And what is it to me whether such a man walk about the place in perfect liberty? Let him be at ease—I know him to be my prey, and that he won't escape me! Where, I ask you, could he go to? You may say abroad. A Pole may do so—but my man, never! especially as I watch him, and have taken steps in consequence. Is he likely to escape into the very heart of our country? Not he! for there dwell coarse moujiks, and the primitive Russians, without any kind of civilization. My educated friend would prefer going to prison, rather than be in the midst of such surroundings. Besides, what I have been saying up to the present is not the main point—it is the exterior and accessory aspect of the question. He won't escape—not only because he won't know where to go, but especially, and above all, because he is mine from the psychological point of view. What do you think of this explanation? In virtue of a natural law, he will not escape, even if he could do so! Have you ever seen a butterfly close to the candle? My man will hover incessantly round me in the same way as the butterfly gyrates round the candle-light. Liberty will have no longer charms for him; he will grow more and more restless, more and more amazed—let me but give him plenty of time, and he will demean himself in a way to prove his guilt as plainly as that twice two are four! Yes, he will keep hovering about me describing circles, smaller and smaller, till at last—bang! He has flown into my clutches, and I have got him. That is very nice. You don't think so perhaps?"

Raskolnikoff kept silent. Pale and immovable, he continued to watch Porphyrius's face with a laboured effort of attention. "The lesson is a good one," he reflected. "But it is not, as yesterday, a case of the cat playing with the mouse. Of course, he does not talk to me in this way for the mere

pleasure of showing me his hand; he is much too intelligent for that. He must have something else in view—what can it be? Come, friend, what you do say is only to frighten me. You have no kind of evidence, and the man of yesterday does not exist! All you wish is to perplex me—to enrage me, so to as enable you to make your last move, should you catch me in such a mood, but you will not; all your pains will be in vain. But why should he speak in such covert terms? I presume he must be speculating on the excitability of my nervous system. But, dear friend, that won't go down, in spite of your machinations. We will try and find out what you really have been driving at."

And he prepared to brave boldly the terrible catastrophe he anticipated. Occasionally the desire came upon him to rush on Porphyrius, and to strangle him there and then. From the first moment of having entered the magistrate's office, what he had dreaded most was, lest he might lose his temper. He felt his heart beating violently, his lips become parched, his spittle becoming congealed. He resolved, however, to hold his tongue, knowing that, under the circumstances, such would be the best tactics.

Finally Raskolnikoff's guilt oppresses him and renders him so miserable, that urged by the unfortunate Sonia he confesses his crime to the police. But his real spiritual resurrection only takes place during his imprisonment in Siberia, where his unbelieving egotism and pride yields at last to the softening influence of Sonia's unbounded love and devotion.

BELLOC LOWNDES

The greatest delineator of fear at the present day is Mrs. Belloc Lowndes, and the two examples that have been chosen from "The Lodger", and "A Chink in the Armour", amply demonstrate her wonderful power in that direction. In the latter novel the reader is introduced to a proud and

extravagant young widow named Sylvia Bailey, who has determined to see life abroad before returning to the somewhat monotonous tenor of her way at Market Mallet. Her solicitor and trustee is in love with her and follows her abroad in order to propose to her; but at Lacville, whither she is drawn by the attraction of the gambling, she meets a French vicomte, who also offers her his hand in marriage. She refuses both for different reasons, and becomes intimate with a couple of German adventurers, who abet her in her gambling and entertain her to recherché suppers and lunches.

To gratify her vanity she purchases a pearl necklace, at a cost of £700, which excites the cupidity of Fritz and his unscrupulous helpmate. On the same day that her two admirers—the English solicitor and the French vicomte—are about to leave Lacville and have, indeed, actually reached the station, Sylvia accepts an invitation to sup with the Wachners after winning a large sum of money at the tables.

The Wachners have rented for the season a small villa surrounded by a wood in a somewhat secluded place; and Sylvia experiences a sensation of gloom whilst approaching the house. Her whole experiences inside are admirably described by the author, at first a vague uneasiness, then astonishment and annoyance, and finally a terrible fear and a growing certainty of impending doom. The story has been dramatized by Mr. Vachell as the *House of Peril*, but is hardly improved. The atmosphere of terror with which Mrs. Belloc Lowndes surrounds the Wachners is lessened in its dramatized form, and the various changes detract from the sheer horror of the situation. The gloomy, taciturn, terrible Fritz becomes the loquacious, greedy, chatty adventurer, and his determined wife develops into an obedient "pussy-cat". The warning given by the maid, the rudeness at the supper, and the grim preparation of the room for the coming struggle, are all omitted in the play; and an element of jocosity is even allowed to

temper the gloom of the coming tragedy. The following passage which, with apologies to Mrs. Belloc Lowndes, we borrow from her novel, is where the heroine finds herself in the House of Peril:

> She got up from her chair, seized with a sudden, eager desire to slip away before they came back. For a moment she even thought of leaving the house without waiting for her hat and little fancy bag; and then, with a strange sinking of the heart she remembered that the white gate was locked, and that L'Ami Fritz had now the key of it in his pocket.
>
> But in no case would Sylvia have had time to do what she had thought of doing, for a moment later her host and hostess were back in the room.
>
> Madame Wachner sat down again at the dining table.
>
> "One moment!" she exclaimed rather breathlessly. "Just wait till I've finished my coffee, Sylvia dear, and then L'Ami Fritz will escort you 'ome."
>
> Rather unwillingly Sylvia sat down again.
>
> Monsieur Wachner was paying no attention either to his guest or to his wife. He took up the chair on which he had been sitting, and placed it out of the way near the door. Then he lifted the lighted lamp off the table and put it on the buffet.
>
> As he did so, Sylvia, looking up, saw the shadow of his tall lank figure thrown grotesquely, hugely, against the opposite wall of the room.
>
> "Now take the cloth off the table," he said curtly. And his wife gulping down the last drops of her coffee, got up and obeyed him.
>
> Sylvia suddenly realized that they were getting ready for something—that they wanted the room cleared.
>
> As with quick, deft fingers she folded up the cloth, Madame Wachner exclaimed: "As you are not taking any coffee, Sylvia, perhaps it is time for you now to get up and go away."
>
> Sylvia Bailey looked across at the speaker, and reddened deeply. She felt very angry. Never in the course of her pleasant, easy, prosperous life had anyone ventured to dismiss her in this fashion from their house.

She rose, for the second time during the course of her short meal, to her feet— And then, in a flash, there occurred that which transformed her anger into agonised fear—fear and terror.

The back of her neck has been grazed by something sharp and cold, and as she gave a smothered cry, she saw that her string of pearls had parted in two. The pearls were now falling quickly one by one, and rolling all over the floor.

Instinctively she bent down, but as she did so she heard the man behind her make a quick movement.

She straightened herself and looked sharply round.

L'Ami Fritz was still holding in his hand the small pair of nail scissors with which he had snipped asunder her necklace; with the other he was in the act of taking out something from the drawer of the buffet.

She suddenly saw what that something was.

Sylvia Bailey's nerves steadied; her mind became curiously collected and clear. There had leapt on her the knowledge that this man and woman meant to kill her—to kill her for the sake of the pearls which were still bounding about the floor, and for the comparatively small sum of money which she carried slung in the leather bag below her waist.

L'Ami Fritz now stood staring at her. He had put his right hand—the hand holding the thing he had taken out of the drawer—behind his back. He was very pale; the sweat had broken out on his sallow thin face.

For a horrible moment there floated across Sylvia's subconscious mind the thought of Anna Wolsky, and of what she now knew to have been Anna Wolsky's fate.

But she put that thought, that awful knowledge, determinedly away from her. The instinct of self-preservation possessed her wholly.

Already, in far less time than it would have taken to formulate the words, she had made up her mind to speak, and she knew exactly what she meant to say.

"It does not matter about my pearls," Sylvia said quietly. Her voice shook a little, but otherwise she spoke in her usual tone. "If you are going into Paris to-morrow morning, perhaps you would take them to be restrung?"

The man looked questioningly across at his wife.

"Yes, that sounds a good plan," he said in his guttural voice.

"No," exclaimed Madame Wachner, decidedly, "that will not do at all! We must not run that risk. The pearls must be found, now, at once! Stoop!" she said imperiously. "Stoop, Sylvia! Help me to find your pearls!"

She made a gesture as if she also meant to bend down.

But Sylvia Bailey made no attempt to obey the sinister order. Slowly, warily, she edged herself towards the closed window. At last she stood with her back to it—at bay.

"No," she said quietly, "I will not stoop to pick up my pearls now, Madame Wachner. It will be easier to find them in the daylight. I am sure that Monsieur Wachner could pick them up for me to-morrow morning. Is not that so, Ami Fritz?" and there was a tone of pleading, for the first time of pitiful fear, in her soft voice.

She looked at him piteously, her large blue eyes wide open, dilated——

"It is not my husband's business to pick up your pearls!" exclaimed Madame Wachner harshly.

She stepped forward and gripped Sylvia by the arm, pulling her violently forward. As she did so she made a sign to her husband, and he pushed a chair quickly between Mrs. Bailey and the window.

Sylvia had lost her point of vantage, but she was young and lithe; she kept her feet.

Nevertheless, she knew with a cold, reasoned knowledge that she was very near to death—that it was only a question of minutes—unless—unless she could make the man and woman before her understand that they would gain far more money by allowing her to live than by killing her now, to-night, for the value of the pearls that lay scattered on the floor, and the small, pitiably small sum on her person.

"If you let me go," she said desperately, "I swear I will give you everything I have in the world!"

Madame Wachner suddenly laid her hand on Sylvia's arm, and tried to force her down on to her knees.

"What do you take us for?" she cried, furiously. "We want nothing from you—nothing at all!"

She looked across at her husband, and there burst from

her lips a torrent of words, uttered in the uncouth tongue which the Wachners used for secrecy.

Sylvia tried desperately to understand, but she could make nothing of the strange, rapid-spoken syllables—until there fell on her ear, twice repeated, the name Wolsky.

Madame Wachner stepped suddenly back, and as she did so L'Ami Fritz moved a step forward.

Sylvia looked at him, an agonized appeal in her eyes. He was smiling hideously, a nervous grin zig-zagging across his large, thin-lipped mouth.

"You should have taken the coffee," he muttered in English. "It would have saved us all so much trouble!"

He put out his left hand, and the long strong fingers, closed tentacle-wise, on her slender shoulder.

His right hand he kept still hidden behind his back.

The other instance that we have chosen to illustrate Mrs. Belloc Lowndes as a past mistress in depicting and in exciting terror, is taken from a novel called "The Lodger". Any casual reader who selects this book under the impression that he is entering upon the perusal of a quiet everyday sort of tale, will encounter a great surprise; for he will soon discover that the lodger is none other than "Jack the Ripper", and that the authoress is giving her explanation of the terrible series of murders and mutilations which horrified London and the world in 1886. The author, however, departs from reality by making the murderer a religious fanatic in lieu of a Sadistic monster, and depicts him as killing people of either sex in a mad crusade against drunkenness. The most powerful passage is when the retired butler encounters his mysterious lodger returning from one of his hideous mutilations.

As he passed by Mr. Sleuth the back of Bunting's bare hand brushed lightly against the long Inverness coat the lodger wore, and to Bunting's surprise the stretch of cloth was not only damp, but wet—wet and gluey. Bunting thrust his left hand into his pocket—it was with the other

that he placed the key in the lock of the door. The two men entered together into the hall. The house seemed blackly dark in comparison with the lighted up road outside, and as he groped forward, closely followed by the lodger, there came over Bunting a sudden, reeling sensation of mortal terror, an instinctive assailing knowledge of frightful immediate danger.

A stuffless voice—the voice of his first wife, the long-dead girl to whom his mind so seldom reverted nowadays—uttered into his ear the words: "Take care!"

And then the lodger spoke. His voice was harsh and grating, though not loud.

"I'm afraid, Mr. Bunting, that you must have felt something dirty, foul, on my coat? It's too long a story to tell you now, but I brushed up against a dead animal, a creature to whose misery some thoughtful soul had put an end, lying across a bench on Primrose Hill."

"No, sir, no. I didn't notice nothing. I scarcely touched you, sir."

It seemed as if a power outside himself had compelled Bunting to utter these lying words. "And now, sir, I'll be saying good night to you," he said.

Stepping back he pressed with all the strength that was in him against the wall, and let the other pass him.

There was a pause, and then—"Good night," returned Mr. Sleuth, in a hollow voice.

Bunting waited until the lodger had gone upstairs, and then lighting the gas, he sat down there, in the hall. Mr. Sleuth's landlord felt very queer—queer and sick.

He did not draw his left hand out of his pocket till he heard Mr. Sleuth shut the bedroom door upstairs. Then he held up his left hand and looked at it curiously; it was flecked, streaked with pale reddish blood.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR LEGAL REFORM

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PARTY Politics are probably necessary for the proper working of the British Constitution; but they frequently mean that obvious reforms for the benefit of the whole community are passed over in favour of partial benefits to certain privileged classes. Conservatives are generally bent on some method of Protection disguised under various names, nominally with the object of decreasing unemployment, but actually to benefit certain manufacturers; or else they are interested in some measure to protect the interests of landlords or purveyors of alcoholic beverages. The Labour Party, on the other hand, are, as a rule, intent on some plan by which manual labourers may get larger wages in return for less work; this they term Idealism. The Liberals seem doomed to permanent or temporary eclipse: so that no Party remains to deal with such a problem as the reform of our whole legal system. Yet few reforms are more urgent than this. The Reform that is required is not such as any lawyer, however great, could ever handle alone; it would need the whole weight of government behind it in order to achieve any real improvement in our cumbrous and complicated legal procedure. Just as in the Middle Ages the Church was too powerful, too rich, and too antiquated, so now it is the Law which is too dilatory, too expensive, and too complicated.

Why should England lag behind France and Prussia in this important matter? In both these countries generals, who were also monarchs, compelled the lawyers to submit to radical reforms; Frederick the Great gave Prussia a vastly improved legal system, and Napoleon extended to France the enormous boon of her excellent Code of Laws. In both these countries any civil suit is about half as expensive, and twice as expeditious, as in England.

Cromwell, our English military dictator, endeavoured to improve the Legal System; he reduced the fees of the Court of Chancery, and re-organized it; he adumbrated plans for the relief of poor debtors, thus anticipating by two centuries and a half a Victorian reform, and in general, he sought to render the Law "plain, short, and less chargeable to the people". But alas! he had no leisure to follow up his beneficent plans; for his premature death put an end to all hope of reform. A Royal Commission ought to be appointed to deal with the whole matter, and the aim of the Commissioners should be identical with those of Cromwell, i.e., greater expedition, less expense, and more simplicity. Such men as Birkenhead, Buckmaster, Inchcape, and Haldane could do much.

In these democratic days, every institution that wishes to justify its existence must show that it considers the interests of the general public as superior to those of its own members; not even the most prejudiced advocate of our present legal system could assert that the interests of clients come before the convenience of lawyers, barristers, and judges. In order to produce this salutary change, the law must be made a public service, which shall be subordinate, and not superior to, the general welfare of the State; in short, our whole legal system must be thoroughly reformed.

Even the inimitable satire of Dickens could effect little against the hide-bound indifference of the law; in "Oliver Twist", the great novelist exposed and remedied the abuses of

the workhouses; in "Martin Chuzzlewit", he showed the incompetence of untrained nurses, and so led to the introduction of our present skilful hospital nurses; but in "Bleak House", he tilted almost in vain against the heart-breaking delays, the never-ending expense, and the intricacies of our legal system; —Mr. Vholes is not dead; he is still very much alive.

In order to remedy the "law's delay", one of the most obvious reforms would be to very much curtail the absurdly long holidays enjoyed by our judges. If a doctor can pursue his arduous and responsible duties for forty-eight weeks out of fifty-two, and if business men of every description can do the like, on what principle are judges permitted to close their courts during the whole of the Long Vacation? Since Magna Charta has decreed that justice should be free, why should any citizen be debarred during any part of the year from obtaining some legal remedy for his injuries? The Town Clerk at Ephesus was able to inform the infuriated crowd that were besetting St. Paul in the theatre, that the courts were open and that they could implead one another; in modern England it would be true to say: "The Courts are shut for the convenience of the judges and barristers; the general public can wait."

Another method for obtaining greater celerity in the administration of justice, would be to pass a Statute of Limitations. All kinds of cases, both civil and criminal, would be divided into various classes according to the difficulties involved, and for each class there would be an extreme limit of time which must not be exceeded; thus, there might be an extreme maximum of two years for the most difficult species of civil suit, with maxima of eighteen months, one year, six months, and three months, and one month for cases presenting less difficulty.

With reference to the second object, the lessening of expense, the greater celerity of the administration of justice,

would of itself tend very largely to reduce expenses; for a case which lasts only four months is of necessity very much less costly than one which drags on its weary course for three or four years.

There would also probably be a considerable saving of expense if the barrister and solicitor could be merged into one; whilst a simplification of procedure would certainly reduce the charges of the latter.

For, the delay and the expense are not so much due to the judges or the barristers as to the solicitors. Once a case has come into court the procedure is fairly rapid, and not excessively expensive. It is whilst the matter is in the hands of the solicitors that so much unnecessary delay and expense occurs. It is, of course, essential to fix the issues prior to the actual hearing of the case; but this could be done much more rapidly than is at present the rule, and it is therefore in this direction that reform is the most urgently demanded. For what can be more absurd than that the Law should be in such a condition that many lawyers advise a client to do anything but commence a suit?

The common saying that: "there is plenty of law in England, but very little justice", would have less foundation if the richer litigant were not enabled, as at present, to delay a decision and complicate the issues by a series of postponements, appeals, and a mass of quibbles and legal technicalities. The right of appeal, which is often abused by the wealthy defendant, should be very much restricted, and in certain cases should only be permitted when the litigant who desires to appeal is prepared to pay the costs of both parties. The great aim should be to obtain speedy and final decisions at as small an expenditure as may be feasible.

Moreover, it would be a great boon to the poor if public lawyers were instituted, paid by the borough councils, to give advice on doubtful points at fees so small as to be within the reach of all.

All possible suspicion of partiality should be carefully avoided. Why, for instance, should the Automobile Association be allowed to maintain scouts to warn motorists of the presence of police traps? Is not this just as much a conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice as if burglars were permitted to have spies to inform them as to the whereabouts of constables? Why should Lady Ponsonby de Tomkyns be only guilt of inadvertence or Kleptomania, when she meanly appropriates property at a large store, whereas Mrs. Jones of Miss Smith is treated as a common thief?

With reference to the rendering of the law more simple, our great need is codification. Law should be simple, precise, and certain; whereas at present it is complicated, vague, and often contradictory. In many cases, leading counsel exhibit a perverted ingenuity in quoting judgements that have been given in the distant past in analogous cases; much of this would be avoided by a clear and precise civil and criminal code such as Napoleon gave to France. The whole law of evidence, too, is needlessly abstruse and complicated, and needs revision and simplification in order to render it less interesting to a lawyer, but more serviceable to the ends of justice and the requirements of everyday life. The lawyer, like the mediaeval priest, hides himself behind a mass of technicalities; and just as the priest rendered his work more mysterious by keeping the services in Latin, so the lawyer purposely uses a mass of useless, confusing verbiage and legal jargon in order to impress the laity.

Many minor reforms are also sadly needed; such as the awarding of fines proportionate to the means of the offender in lieu of fixed amounts for certain offences. A forty shillings fine is a mere flea bite to a wealthy man; but to a poor man his inability to discharge it frequently entails the disgrace of imprisonment. The means of the offender should, to a certain extent, regulate the amount of the fine. The inducement of a

shorter sentence should be offered to criminals to disgorge their booty. Clever rogues should be baffled by a further extension of the criminal law, so as to catch within its toils the dishonest company promoter and the fraudulent bankrupt or cheating debtor. Many ancient statutes should be abolished, and our legal system should cease to be a curious mosaic of anomalous antiquities, and become an efficient means of securing the redress of injuries and the obtainment of justice.

The Criminal Law, with which this book is immediately concerned, is much better administered than the Civil; for it is more expeditious, less expensive, and infinitely more simple. Even so it is far from perfect, and is, like all human institutions, capable of improvement. First, our English Rules concerning Evidence need revision; for in our laudable desire to rely on the very best evidence procurable we have often debarred certain other evidence which might often prove very useful. Hearsay evidence, as it is somewhat contemptuously called, may often be of great value; and in the case of a statement of a dying man, is received even at present. This exception needs further extension; for in our aim at perfection in evidence we must not forget Napoleon's favourite maxim: "*Le meilleur est l'ennemi du bien*".

Legal rules and technicalities must yield to equity and common sense. The most extraordinary instance of a man preferring legal technicality to justice, is recited by Major Griffiths in his well-known book on crime in an anecdote that he cites concerning a certain Judge Cambo. This learned fool actually witnessed a murder from the window of his house in Malta, and recognized the assassin, who looked up for a moment before he threw away his weapon, and then escaped. A few seconds later a baker passed by, looked at the dead body, and picked up the sheath of the assassin's dagger. The baker was arrested and brought before Cambo. The judge,

however, was of opinion that he ought to try the matter as though he knew nothing about it in his private capacity, and actually allowed the unhappy baker to be forced into a false confession by torture, and then to be executed for a crime he had never committed. Well might Bumble exclaim: "The Law is an ass".

Secondly, the powers of our Police should be enlarged, so as to make them more able to cope with the wiles of the modern criminal. We are too tender in our dealing with suspected persons, and in our zeal for personal liberty, and our dread of torture, wrongful arrest, and invasion of the privacy of the subject, we unduly favour the enemies of Society. Without copying exactly our French neighbours in the inquistorial methods pursued by a *juge d'instruction*, or adopting the system known as the third degree in America, we might, with great benefit to ourselves, extend the powers both of our police and magistrates. For instance, there does not seem any valid reason why an arrested person should be cautioned at the moment of his apprehension.

There is such a strong sporting spirit among us that many people are inclined to regard the eternal struggle between the criminal and the law as a species of game in which the former is entitled to certain well-recognized privileges of which it would be very mean to deprive him. In fact, some foolish persons actually admire rogues like Bottomley because of their cleverness, and are genuinely sorry when they are punished. The rogue is so interesting in the novel and play and on the screen, that they begin to feel a real affection for him, provided, of course, that his rogueries are not committed at their own expense.

Often when people complain about some crime going unavenged, or some mystery remaining unsolved, the real criminal has been arrested, tried and acquitted, as in the case of the youthful Sadistic monster at Abertillery; and still

more often he has never been tried, because there has not been sufficient evidence to lay before the Court.

Thirdly, our present division of violent death into Murder, Manslaughter, Justifiable Homicide, and Misadventure, is not sufficient. The crime of Murder itself needs further differentiation, into Murder of the First and Second Degree; murder of the first degree should be reserved for cold-blooded murders that are entirely without excuse, and these should be punished by death. But murders of the second degree that were provoked, or in some sense more excusable, should be punished by a lengthy period of penal servitude. The killing of illegitimate infants by their mothers has already been exempted from the death penalty, and this principle needs to be still further extended. For at present juries frequently bring in verdicts of manslaughter in defiance of the evidence, because they are unwilling to allow the prisoner to be hanged.

At one time in England, especially under the first three Georges, the death penalty was affixed to a large number of offences; and possibly much of our criminal law which seems to favour the defence was due to a humane desire to temper the rigour of the law by the device of legal technicalities. With the same singlemindedness that Plimsole applied himself to save the lives of sailors, so did Romilly give all his time, talent, and energy to the amelioration of our criminal law. He found capital punishment awarded to a multitude of petty offences, and, influenced by the teaching of Rousseau and Beccaria, he succeeded in securing a very large reduction in their number. Indeed, it would seem as if in the early part of the eighteenth century every insignificant Member of Parliament who had a grievance was pacified by being permitted to add some new offence to the already swollen list of felonies which were punishable by death. Even the old device known as "benefit of clergy" (which by a solemn farce had been extended to all who could read in Latin the first verse of the

Psalm LI) was removed from a large number of offences. People could be, and of course were, hanged for stealing trifling sums of money or articles of small value; soldiers and sailors could be hanged for begging; and children for stealing a handkerchief from a bleaching ground! Some of these barbarous absurdities were removed through the efforts of Romilly; others had to wait some thirty years longer.

At the present time the death penalty is reserved for murder, treason, and destroying arsenals or dockyards. Martial Law, is, of course, quite distinct, and death can be afflicted for various militaty offences. There has always been a large section of the community opposed to capital punishment; and at present there is an agitation on foot to secure its abolition. Many humanitarians consider that the State has no right to take life; though the XXXVII Article of the Anglican Church declares that: "the Laws of the Realm may punish Christian men with death for heinous and grievous offences". No doubt murders differ in atrocity, and it will probably be found advisable to retain capital punishment for cold-blooded, cruel, and unprovoked murders.

Human nature being more or less static, public opinion will always demand the death of such monsters as Dumollard, Pranzini, Palmer, Landru, or Smith, who have proved themselves unworthy of any consideration. Indeed, in some respects our penal code is in danger of becoming too lenient; for such crimes as the mutilation of a little child by a brutal father, or the blinding by vitriol of a faithless lover, or successful rival by a vindictive woman, seem to demand severer penalties than those which they at present receive. Indeed, speaking generally, offences against property are punished too severely, whereas those against the person escape too lightly.

In cases of death sentences, the Crown's prerogative of pardon still remains to temper the severity of the Law. In

former days this privilege, or duty, was actually exercised by the kings themselves; but as in so many cases, the personal power of monarchs has yielded insensibly to the exercise of their prerogative by their appointed Ministers.

Anne was the last sovereign to refuse to sanction a Bill in 1707; George II the last king to command an army in battle, at Dettingen, in 1743; George III the last to canvass for the rejection of a measure introduced by his own Ministry; and William IV the last to grant reprieves to criminals. George II was adamant in his refusal to grant reprieves to Byng, Ferrers, or Lovat; and during the illness of George III many criminals were kept in a painful state of uncertainty concerning their fate. On the accession of Queen Victoria, as criminal investigation was thought unsuitable to a young girl, this ticklish business was made over to the Home Secretary, with whom it at present rests. He often feels the responsibility as very onerous, and this difficult duty has doubtless cost Home Secretaries sleepless nights in their delicate task of balancing justice against mercy. In future it will probably be found advisable to associate with him two judges, so as to form a Committee of three for this important duty.

When these principles of greater speed, less expense, and more simplicity, with many other minor reforms, have been established, the peoples of the British Empire will enjoy the benefits promised to them seven hundred years ago in Magna Charta: "To no man shall we sell, or deny, or delay Right and Justice".

THE END

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